AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

AN INVESTIGATION OF PROCESSES OF SECTARIAN
TERRITORIALIZATION IN BEIRUT
BIR HASSAN AS A CASE STUDY

by
YASMINE HASSAN FARHAT

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Urban Planning and Policy
to the Department of Architecture and Design
of the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon
April 2019

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Date of thesis defense: 15 April 2019

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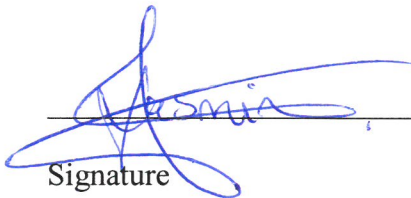
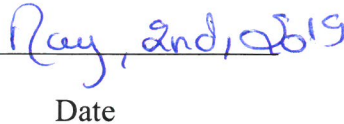**X**   Master's Thesis   Master's Project   Doctoral Dissertation

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Yasmine Hassan Farhat   for <u>Master of Urban Planning and Policy</u>
<u>Major</u>: Urban Planning

Title: <u>An Investigation of Processes of Sectarian Territorialization in Beirut Bir Hassan as a Case Study.</u>

I moved to Bir Hassan, Beirut, Lebanon in 2006 and witnessed its transition from a high-end residential neighborhood into a high-security Shiite enclave. In Lebanon, enclaving is initiated by powerful sectarian groups, and its spatial materialization in the division of cities or regions into political territories (Farah, 2011; Bou Akar, 2018). In this context, one reads Bir Hassan's ongoing enclaving as the imposition of the particular rule of one sectarian-political party.

The party has enhanced security to those who "belong" to its political orientation while sharpening territorial boundaries for others. It has also imposed a new set of spatial constraints that influence the daily routines of neighborhood residents. This was achieved by penetrating the networks and channels that organize the production of space in the neighborhood, including housing development and exchange, as well as commercial activities, thus transforming the area gradually into a highly-secured zone, a "hot spot" (Fawaz et. al, 2012). This ultimately materialized into a new type of urban governance that escapes traditional municipal control or maybe interrelates with it, to form a shared type of power (Farah, 2011; Harb, 2009).

The findings of this thesis are significant for planning theory because they inform us of the role that planning and the production of the built environment can play in the reproduction of social forces at various moments in Beirut's history and ultimately in facilitating urban enclaving and the city's fragmentation.

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CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION

Planners have long advocated for the integration of urban neighborhoods and the fluidity of movements across them. Nonetheless, in practice, most cities are divided along class, race, sectarian and/or ethnic lines (Harvey, 1973). There is however little understanding of the processes through which this territorialization happens, particularly when neighborhoods begin as new developments and transform gradually into enclosed areas (Wissink, 2013). In this thesis, I aim to unravel the processes through which urban fragmentation happens in the context of a "conflict city" where urban divisions amount to the formation of political territories controlled by rivaling factions, even in the absence of violent conflict. I take as a case study the neighborhood where I have lived since 2006: Bir Hassan (Beirut's immediate south-western suburb, Lebanon), today a clearly delineated political territory controlled by Shiite parties, particularly the Amal movement.[1]

Few could have predicted that the Bir Hassan neighborhood would turn into this form of enclave when it was first conceived in the 1960s as a high-end, modern development area in the southwestern suburbs of Beirut (Lebanon). Since the end of the civil war (1975-1990), Bir Hassan has shifted gradually to a high-security enclave dominated by one political group and inhabited almost exclusively by one sectarian

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[1] Amal emerged in the early 70s as a social movement defending the rights of the deprived Shiites in Lebanon. It was initially founded by Moussa Al-Sadr who disappeared in 1978, headed afterwards by Nabih Berri. The movement has been quite active in the southern suburbs until Hezbollah became a concrete force on the ground, especially after the Israeli invasion of Beirut in 1982 (Norton, 1987).

group. It therefore constitutes an adequate case study for urban planners interested in understanding forces that generate territorial enclaves in conflict cities.

Administratively, the neighborhood of Bir Hassan falls under the jurisdiction of the Ghobeiry Municipality.2 The area is located at the edge of the well-known Southern Suburbs of Beirut (or Dahieh, see Harb 2001) and it almost seems that over the years, it shifted from being the "suburb of Beirut" to becoming the "suburb of Dahieh", the latter being the political territory of the southern suburb of Beirut widely associated with the rise of Shiite political power in Lebanon (Harb, 2001). Indeed, Bir Hassan has fallen under the heavy influence of the dominant Shiite political parties in Lebanon, namely Amal and Hezbollah[3] whose presence in the neighborhood is heavily reflected by the proliferation of flags, philanthropic boxes, posters of political leaders and men who openly display their control over the area. This strong Shiite political identity is further strengthened by the presence of powerful political landmarks in the area including the Iranian Embassy and the Amal movement's headquarters and branch offices.

Since 2013, following a number of "terror attacks" targeting Shiite religious landmarks4, political parties in the area have found justification in the threat of sectarian violence to deploy their security apparel, introducing severe security

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[2] The Ghobeiry Municipality is the Head of the Union of Municipalities of the Southern Suburbs of Beirut, a Union highly organized by Hezbollah who also closely coordinates the election of the Municipal Council in this Municipality. For more, see Harb (dates).

[3] Hezbollah was founded as an Islamist movement, and is currently a Lebanese Shiite party in Lebanon. It was formed in 1982, during the Lebanese civil war and is currently headed by Hassan Nasrallah (Harb, 2001).

[4] The series of terrorist attacks between 2011 and 2014 targeting Hezbollah's Dahieh constituted the main trigger for the Shiite parties to deploy their security apparatuses in the Southern Suburbs.

protection in Bir Hassan. The political identity is further reflected in the social transformations of the neighborhood that is now widely identified as "Shiite", a sectarian identity that was strengthened by the 2006 Israel war on Lebanon and its aftermath. One can read this identity for instance through the publicly displayed pictures of the Speaker of the House, Nabih Berri, who leads one of the two large Shiite political parties Amal, and through the renaming of the neighborhood streets after popular figures in Shiite politics such as "El Imam Moussa Sader Street" which was known as the Saint-Simon Street.5 The main entrances to the neighborhood are marked by checkpoints, usually controlled by two security guards, either from the Amal movement, the Hezbollah party, or the Lebanese army - depending on the locations. These checkpoints reflect the political identity of the neighborhood since Amal and Hezbollah's flags are flaunted in every neighborhood corner and highly visible to visitors even before reaching the checkpoints.

Furthermore, the Amal movement has established its headquarters in the area in 2014. The decision of locating the headquarters specifically in Bir Hassan is not random, it relates to the presence of Amal affiliated politicians living in the neighborhood, chief among them Minister Ali Hassan Khalil and Mr. Ahmad Baalbaki, a close advisor to Speaker of the House Nabih Berri. The building of the headquarters implies on the neighborhood scale a political affirmation by strengthening the political identity within the neighborhood and at a smaller scale (personal) an interest for politicians living in the area to benefit from an increase in security.

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[5] While the process of renaming streets according to important Shiite figures started earlier in the southern suburbs of Beirut, it only became visible in Bir Hassan in the past five years.

A. Thesis Scope

In this thesis, I first aim to map the way in which the neighborhood of Bir Hassan was transformed during the post-war era, from a modern urban suburb into a high-security enclave dominated by one political group and inhabited almost exclusively by one sectarian group. My research begins by tracing the shifting position of Bir Hassan in planning imaginaries, looking at three moments of the neighborhood's history: early formation, post-war reconstruction, and post-2010. I then dive into the examination of building practices in the area, identifying developers in every period of the neighborhood's development, starting as a quarter in the suburbs of Beirut to becoming the high-end suburb of Dahieh, the Shiite enclave of Beirut controlled by Amal and Hezbollah. While in both cases the neighborhood retains an upper class, relatively low-density morphology, its everyday practices are profoundly modified, as are the profiles of its residents.

B. Research Questions and Arguments

The thesis raises the following questions: What are the mechanisms through which urban enclaves, particularly security enclaves, are being consolidated in today's Beirut, a city notorious for its conflicts and supposed to be currently in "post-war" conditions? Aside from roadblocks and visible security mechanisms (Fawaz et al. 2012), how are the channels of building activities, population mobility, and daily practices transformed and how do they contribute to the formation of territorialized enclaves? Furthermore, given that the planning process has proved to be here in Lebanon (Bou Akar 2018, Harb 2009) and elsewhere (Yiftachel 2003) part and parcel of a territorial political project, what role can we document for planning, its institutions

and agencies in the consolidation of the political territory in Bir Hassan? What can we say about "planning" in this context?

Aside from the visible presence of political parties, I hypothesized in the first stages of my thesis that the political identity of Bir Hassan is reflected in the identity of the developers who have been building the neighborhood: building activities are restricted to Muslim Shiites, typically close to Shiite political parties. My survey of building development confirmed the hypothesis, buttressing the argument that the production of sectarian political territory should also be understood through the channels of building production. I further argue that the development business in Bir Hassan amounts to a cycle where (Muslim Shiite) social networks encourage Shiite individuals to buy from the same developers residential or commercial units, strengthening the nature of a "Shiite enclave". Similarly, I documented the same logic to apply to Shiite only businesses opening in the area meaning that offices and shops in the neighborhood are only held by supporters of the political parties in charge, maybe people who identify as Shiite. This is significant because of the vibrant commercial activity that developed in the neighborhood, reflecting a specific growth of the area sustaining a territorialized economy.

My argument is that territorial formation in today's Beirut is powerfully consolidated by building activities that influence enclaving processes by concentrating all the channels of building development and exchange in the hands of a few "approved" developers who benefit from some protection of the political parties. While my data collection is not exhaustive enough to demonstrate this trend, there is sufficient proof to point in this direction. I further argue that residents alike have an important role in the process of enclaving as they voluntarily choose to live in a social environment

(termed *bi'a*– by Bou Akar, 2018), which they feel they can "relate to". In sum, one can only understand enclaving by looking at the role of developers and residents and by tracing how planning is used to consolidate the reorganization of territories.

C. Thesis Significance

I moved to Bir Hassan after the July 2006 war and witnessed its growing economic sector, political affiliation and population growth and became curious to understand the mechanisms through which it transformed into a political territory. To me, and many others who moved into a mixed residential neighborhood that is welcoming to all only to find themselves in a sectarian security enclave, the study is significant in helping us to understand the processes through which the neighborhoods where we live are transforming. Moreover, taking into consideration that the neighborhood is already protected by national forces (the presence of the Lebanese army checkpoints), I am very interested in how a political party can reinforce its presence and control over neighborhoods without the consent of all its residents. Finally, the control of this political party engenders new commercial and social practices that considerably changed the life of the neighborhood and attracted new social groups who have powerfully transformed the "feel" of the neighborhood: it is undeniably more popular and more overtly religious. The thesis has hence a personal significance to me, as well as to many other residents of the area, in helping us understand how the neighborhood where we live has transformed over the past two decades.

Furthermore, as a planner, I am interested in thinking about the role that planning and building activities play to foster this process of enclaving and/or prevent

it.

As such, my thesis provides significant insights that help extend ongoing debates about the role of planning in the formation of sectarian/ethnic territory, particularly when it is practiced by untypical state agents such as political parties. Both Yiftachel (2006) and Bou-Akar (2018) have argued that planning is a critical part of the making of ethnic or religious territory and the divisions of cities, despite a widespread assumption that planning necessarily operates otherwise. In this thesis, I hope to provide additional material to inform our understanding of how planning indeed operates as a divisive mechanism but also perhaps to allow for avenues of thinking how we can counter this process.

D. Concept of "Enclaving"

Over the past decade, concerns about urban enclaves and their repercussion in undermining democracy have animated the field of urban studies. Some of the main voices rising against enclaving emerge from the LA School of Urban Studies whose members denounce urban enclaving as enabling powerful groups to spatially exclude those deemed undesirable. This exclusion, these authors argue, has severe implications in undermining the possibility of democracy (Davis 1990; Marcuse 1997; Caldeira 2000).

Enclaves are "agglomerations of unequal urban districts, sharply divided by race, class and other social distinguishers, and often physically separated" (Angotti 2013 p. 113). They are spaces "appropriated by powerful individuals […] and consciously separated from the commons" in order to allow these influential actors to "protect their power and control over resources and people" (Angotti 2013, p. 114). Yet

looking further into urbanscapes, it is possible to see that divisions occur in multiple forms. For instance, Marcuse (2002) documented three types of urban divisions in contemporary cities. These are (i) cultural divisions (e.g. difference in nationality, ethnicity and religion), (ii) functional divisions (results of economic logic, e.g. zoning) and (iii) status divisions (e.g. class, income and occupation). Marcuse argued that these spatial divisions resulted in the formation of "gated communities and enclaves", which characterize today's cities. In line with the LA School and other urban scholars, Marcuse has denounced this enclaving, which undermines the possibility of building just and well-functioning cities.

These definitions suggest the importance of looking at developers as key role in the production of urban enclaves by channeling planning regulations and contributing to the production of sectarian territories. The recognition of enclaves as powerful models of urban formation requires us to look at the role that planning can play in the process, whether it supports or prevents it.

E. Methodology

In describing, analyzing and conceptualizing the territorialization processes and securitization mechanisms deployed and promoted by both political parties and developers and furthermore embraced by the dwellers of the neighborhood of Bir Hassan, this research has utilized a mixed-methods research approach based on the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data. The methodology rests on conducting a case study analysis of the Bir Hassan neighborhood, which trajectory provides an excellent case for the investigation of enclaving and the role of planning in the process. This chapter outlines the research methodology.

1. *Research Approach*

My research relied on both quantitative and qualitative data collection. I collected a set of building permits issued by the municipality of Ghobeiry between 1970 and 2018 in order to trace and analyze the trends in building developments occurring in the neighborhood. However, the review was not exhaustive because the Municipality of Ghobeiry was only willing to share 63 permits for this entire period. Therefore, I had to complement this data set of collected building permits with data that I gathered during my field visits. I was able to recognize the year of establishment of some of the buildings and their developers by interviewing people and/or through the analysis of aerial photos. I introduced the collected data in an Excel sheet and proceeded by pegging each building development (property owner and architect) to identify the main developers who have worked and are currently working in the area since the 70s to date. I also looked into the permit for building's landowners since their names can help me trace the changes in sectarian belonging of landowners in this area. Following this mapping exercise, I selected 5 developers that I interviewed in order to learn more about their building activities and trajectories, how they secure the ingredients of housing production and exchange (e.g. land, banks, and clients). My aim, through this mapping exercise and interviews was to trace the "chain" in building activities and see how it has transformed particularly in the control and linkages within the Shiite community. Through these interviews, I also explored the relation of developers with the Municipality of Ghobeiry and the political parties present in the area (Hezbollah and the Amal Movement), their scope of activity and limitations, always in relation to the dominant security system.

I thirdly developed a set of maps that look at markers of enclaving (e.g.

security map that comprises of the location of flags, landmarks, checkpoints, (distinguishing those of the Amal movement, the Hezbollah party and the Lebanese Army) and security staff in the area, others). This helped me understand the visible elements or markers that led to the formation of the enclaved Bir Hassan neighborhood and the repercussions of this securitization on the dwellers' activity (transportation and pedestrian). In this context, security reflects a privatized form of control and surveillance and has important implications on the social and the economic realms, becoming an integral element in the production of space (Fawaz et al. 2012). Security, in this sense, enhances the formation of enclaves "where wealthier social groups retreat from the city proper to their secured quarters" (Fawaz et al., 2012; Davis, 2006).

Fourth, based on a selective household interviews, I targeted 3 groups of residents: the first group comprised of people who settled in the neighborhood in the early 2000s, the second group comprised of people who came to the neighborhood after the 2006 war, and the third group tackled people who moved in after the 2013 terrorist attacks and the proliferation of security in the area. I interviewed dwellers in the area that I identified throughout the data collected from building permits in order to profile them: the "social environment" they belong to, their social class, and their political affiliation. I also identified some of the interviewees through personal connections and word of mouth where by someone I interviewed would put me in contact with another person they know to interview them. This technique was useful to reach people who were previously living in the area and recently moved out. The aim of this categorization was to understand the factors that drove the latter to move into the neighborhood, their former residence, their future housing plans, their relation with space in the rise of securitization and privatization in the neighborhood, their relation

with developers in the area, and finally their opinion towards the municipality and its role in the neighborhood. I also found it interesting to map the trajectory of the dwellers in the neighborhood. I therefore asked them about their daily practices in order to understand their relation with the space (e.g. where do they go? how do they commute? Do they use spaces in the neighborhood?).

The commercial activity in the area is highly vibrant and should be explored within the framework of this thesis, therefore I identified a few shops and through informal discussions with their owners, I was able to explore and understand the main motives behind opening a business in the neighborhood of Bir Hassan or a second branch. I also looked into their clientele (age, religion, social class and place of residency). Furthermore, I addressed their relation with the municipality, developers and political parties in order to study their position towards enclaving and possible role within this process. Moreover, the fact that many of these shops are already established in Dahieh (the Southern suburbs of Beirut), opening a branch in Bir Hassan or moving out completely to this neighborhood was highly interesting to understand the available dynamics between the Southern Suburbs (Dahieh) and the Bir Hassan neighborhood.

Fifth, to understand how public representatives plan the area, I conducted interviews with stakeholders such as political parties – Amal headquarters – in order to understand their implication on the neighborhood (legal, political, social) and the mechanisms of collaboration with the municipality. In addition, I held interviews with public officials, including the Mayor of Ghobeiry and discussed their level of involvement in the neighborhood in the production and enhancement of security. Also, on which scale these authorities are intervening in the neighborhood and are there any mechanisms of collaboration with the political parties or even developers in the area

participating all together in the proliferation of this new "economy of Islamic resistance" (Fawaz, 2007).

In order to locate all this information in its historical context, I gathered archival documents such as historical maps, aerial photos and building permits from the municipality of Ghobeiry. I also located records on population movements and growth from the Public Agency Elyssar to learn more about regulations, planning and zoning in the neighborhood.

2. *Methods used*

a. Physical Mapping

The physical mapping exercise rested on providing the following sets of maps:

1- Tracing the development of the area by collecting the building permits from the municipality (Overlay of the different stages of construction);

2- Developing a map of the markers of enclaves based on field observation and notes (Political: centers, signs, pictures, checkpoints; Social: gathering spots, users and Economic: outlets, popular shops, stores).

b. Qualitative interviews

I interviewed 20 residents, 12 shop owners, 5 main developers, the Mayor of the Municipality of Ghobeiry and Amal movement representatives. I identified the residents through my social contacts, which in turn put me in contact with other residents in the area and used the online data collection tool "Survey Monkey" where I shared the questionnaire on two platforms: Facebook and WhatsApp. The targeted residents fit into the three defined categories: people who settled in the neighborhood in the early 2000s, people who came into the neighborhood after the 2006 war and people

who moved in after the 2013 terrorist attacks and the proliferation of security in the area. In most cases, the respondents where either young or head of households mainly women since they were the most accessible and reachable. Interviews with residents were semi-structured comprising of a questionnaire that would initially profile the interviewees, look into their housing trajectories and future plans, and understand their relationship to the neighborhood its surroundings and the different parties involved in the planning process and decision making in the area (developers, municipality and political parties). These interviews were not recorded and I abstained from revealing the identity of the interviewees in respect of anonymity and since it would affect the respondents' answers as some questions address the political and sectarian context within the area, which might reveal the respondents political affiliation. The questionnaire furthermore looked into the respondents' daily practices and their perception of their spatiality of everyday life. It also analyses the degree of the lived and perceived social and spatial detachment from their home, work, study and mobile space.

As for the shop owners, I have randomly approached 12 during my fieldwork. Based on my knowledge of the area, I was able to distinguish the date of establishment of the different shops in the neighborhood and provide an overview of the most recent and old ones. I have mainly concentrated on the nature of the shops, the products they sale and the customers they serve and was interested in tracing their history: Do they have other branches and where? Why did they relocate to this area?

On the level of developers, throughout the collection of building permits I was able to identify the five main developers in the area. Moreover, the secretary in the municipality of Ghobeiry provided me with a list that holds the largest developers working in the area, which also made it easier to identify them. The questionnaire for

this category addressed their building activity, the modes of stock and payment and their relationship with the municipality and the political parties.

I have approached the of the Municipality of Ghobeiry in order to better understand the history of the neighborhood and the planning processes that occur along their role within the neighborhood and relationship with the political parties.

Finally, I interviewed an Amal movement representative and focused mainly on the role of the movement and its influence in the neighborhood to understand the movement's relation with the municipality of Ghobeiry. In other terms, I mainly focused on the existent/absent collaboration/coordination between both parties when it comes to planning the 'everyday' of the Bir Hassan neighborhood.

3. *Limitations*

This research faced several limitations. The first limitation is related to the subjects of the research: on the level of residents, most of them are from the same social class and sectarian affiliation, which constitutes quite a homogeneous sample for the study. Therefore, interviewees' responses and perceptions were quite similar. On the level of identifying developers, it was very difficult to reach all main developers in the area since the most active ones are reputable and well-off businessmen who typically operate closely to the Amal and Hezbollah parties (bias). Furthermore, many of them were unavailable and appointed a representative from their offices to meet with me, others were reluctant in sharing information. On the level of the Amal movement representatives and the Municipality of Ghobeiry staff, confidentiality and the reluctance of sharing information was also a major limitation. Finally, the political and security context in which the fieldwork took place restrained my accessibility to

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information. I was unable to move freely in the neighborhood and could not map or access all areas that were highly secured and observed. The pedestrian and car activity are to a certain extent restricted in some roads, mainly near the Amal headquarters building and the Iranian Embassy.

F. Thesis Outline

The first chapter of the thesis introduces the research subject, its scope and significance and provides the detailed methodology used for conducting this research. Chapter 2 introduces Bir Hassan case study profile, tracing the neighborhood's urban trajectory throughout the identified three phases of planning to locate it, in Chapter 3, in the planning discourse and urban plans that have been designed and adopted for the Southwestern Suburbs of Beirut. Chapter 4 studies the role of municipal authorities, affiliated developers and political parties' in the making of the securitized Shiite enclave. Chapter 5 documents residents' practices and perceptions of the Bir Hassan neighborhood. In a final chapter 6, I conclude my thesis work and suggest reversing the debate on enclaves conceived as a negative process of territorialization in today's cities.

CHAPTER

II. BIR HASSAN CASE STUDY

The Bir Hassan neighborhood began as a pre-planned suburb of Beirut (Verdeil, 2011). It has an interesting history since it was modeled throughout the years to transition in what Clerc (2009) described as from 'a virgin territory' into a 'city'. The Bir Hassan neighborhood is bounded by major informal settlements in the city – *Sabra, Shatila, Ouzai, Raml El Ali, Horsh El Quatil and Horsh Tabet*. It is located on the western edge of the southern suburbs of Beirut and bounded by the Airport road on the northeastern side, the Ouzai road on the south and the Sports Complex on the western side (Figure 1).

Figure 1 Satellite base map of Bir Hassan provided by Google Earth (Author: Samer Schinder)

In this chapter, I will introduce the Bir Hassan neighborhood and trace its spatial organization; more specifically its transition from a pre-planned area of the southwestern suburbs of Beirut to a modern area demarcated by the city's major informal settlements.

A. Bir Hassan as a pre-planned area of the southwestern suburbs of Beirut

The Bir Hassan lot (189) – previously known as "*Cheikh El Dahra*" – was initially bought in 1906 by "*The Egyptian Enterprise and Development Co.*", a company which was established in 1904 by Mansour Neghib Chakkour Pacha[6] who had the ambition of creating a new city "Bayrout al-Jadidat" south-west of Beirut, near Ouzai (Figure 2) (Lebanese Republic, "L'affaire des sables", 1955). In the claims of the company, "*Bayrouth al-Jadidat*" presented a "solution to the problem of congestion in the city center and probably also a response to the sensitivity of the bourgeoisie vis-à-vis certain sectors of it" (Davie M., Beyrouth, 1825-1975, p.89 in Clerc, 2009).

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[6] Son of a landowner from Mount Lebanon and long-time settler in Egypt, Mansour N.Chakkour was born in Cairo in 1868. After studying engineering at the University of London and Switzerland, he returned to Egypt in 1889 and made a career at the Ministry of Public Works, then at the railways, until his resignation in 1905 to take care of his personal career in engineering (Wright A. dir., *Twentieth century impressions of Egypt*, Londres, 1909 in Clerc, 2009)
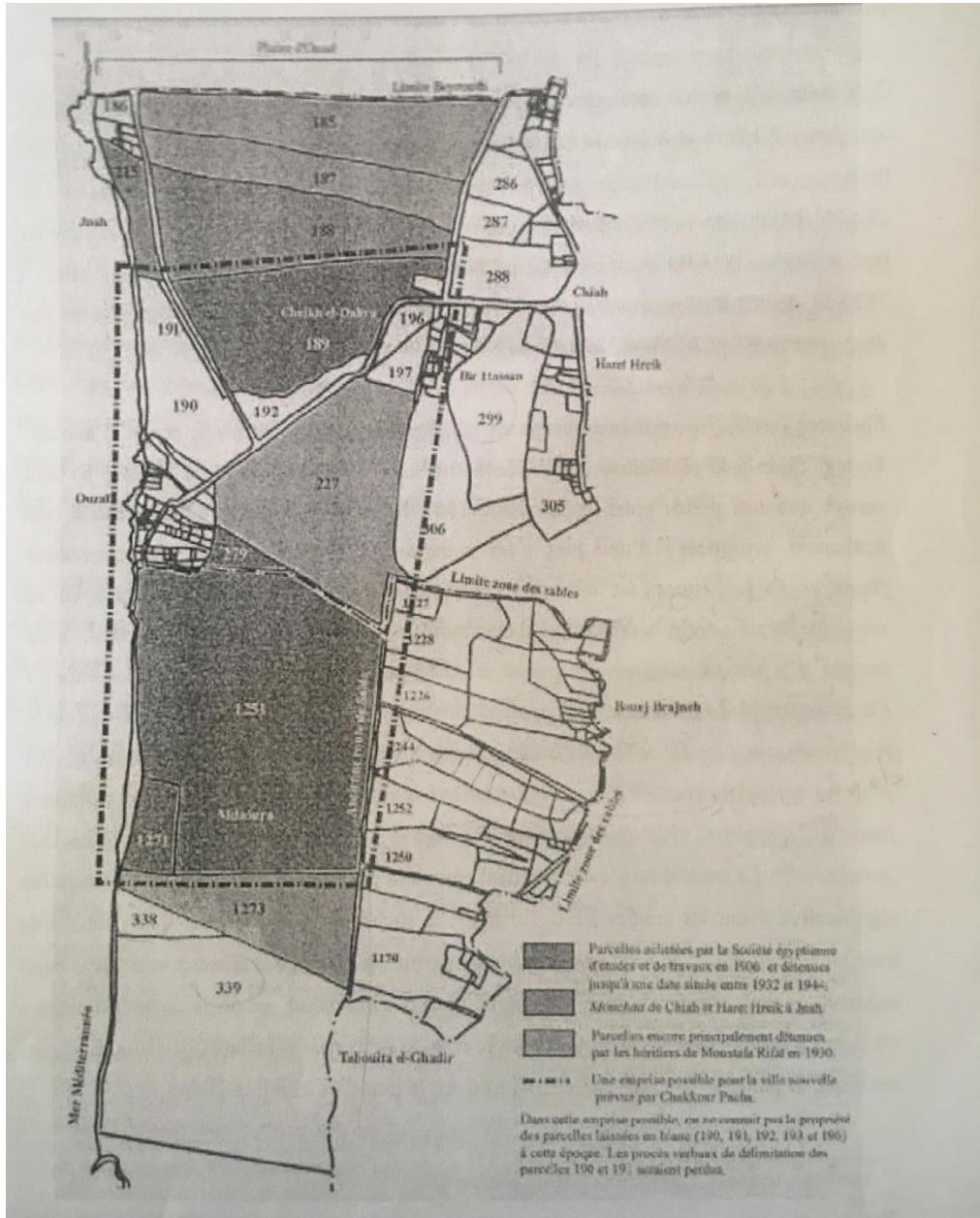
Figure 2 Purchased lots for the realization of Chakkour Pacha new city in 1906 (Source:
Clerc, 2009, p.209)

Seeking to replicate the example of the city of Heliopolis in Cairo, the
"Bayrouth al-Jadidat" project proposed to replicate a model of speculative urban
subdivision that inspired many operations throughout the 19th and 20th century

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(Lebanese Republic, "L'affaire des sables", p.14). The new district was located in the southwestern region of Beirut because of "its salubrity and the beauty of its landscape" (Lebanese Republic, "L'affaire des sables", p.14). The Egyptian company purchased the land on the 4th of December 1906, through a third party – Habib Ghanem[7] (p.6). In 1908, Habib Ghanem sold 60% of the lot 189 to Edouard Nice, president of the administrative board of the company under act number 1443, registered in the Metn court. Edouard Nice owned this lot until 1931.The delimitation of lot 189 disappeared from public records (Ibid. p.150), but Edouard Nice is cited for the authentication of the boundaries of the neighboring parcel 188: "*We draw the attention of the commission to prove the right of ownership of this property. In December 14, 1931, Mr. Edouard N., the representative of the Egyptian Entreprise and Development Co. recognized the exact southern limit of the lot because it infringes on the northern limit of lot 189 which belonged to that enterprise*" (Official proceeding of lot 188 subdivision in 1931 in Clerc, 2009).

The "Bayrout al-Jadidat" project was interrupted by World War I and Cheikh el-Dahra area was transformed into a military center by the French who took over the properties until the war in 1939-1945. Previously the area was an agricultural land, made of orange trees and other greeneries. However, it was soon ravished by sands dunes (Lebanese Republic, "*L'affaire des sables*", 1955).

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[7] Since Ottoman law did not allow companies to be proprietors in the Sultanates, the company was obliged to register the land in the name of one person. Habib Ghanem, Nakhle Ibrahim Saba and Ibrahim Tabet were the owners of lot 189 during this period (Lebanese Republic, "*L'affaire des sables*", 1955, p.6).

B. From Village to suburb: a modern pre-planned area surrounded by Beirut's major informal settlements

The area where the Bir Hassan neighborhood was developed in 1963 fell initially under the jurisdiction of the Chiyah municipality. However, when in 1956 the old village of Chiyah was divided into two distinct municipalities "Chiyah and Ghobeiry", Bir Hassan fell as of 1961 under the jurisdiction of the Ghobeiry municipality. Ghobeiry was a small village located on a green land characterized by its trees and attractive gardens before it got massively urbanized as of the 50s. It was later affected by the political events and the illegal occupation of land that it inherited to date.

In his book *From Village to suburbs*, Fuad Khuri traces Chiyah's transition from ancient (legends and superstitions) peasant settlement (settlement of different families) to suburban (pattern of rural to urban migration, intensity of construction and real estate transactions and disruption of community life) (Khuri, 1975). Khuri records the earliest settlement in Chiyah back to the Shihab emirate between 1697 and 1842[8]. The Maronites emigration and the Shiite settlement in Chiyah between 1925 till 1935, led to the development of a new village called Ghobeiry, distinct from Chiyah. The settlement of the 22,000 migrants transformed the two villages into distinct suburbs in the early 50s: Chiyah, predominantly Maronite, and Ghobeiry Shiite (Khuri, 1975). Today, Ghobeiry, which fell under the influence of the Hezbollah party, is presented as an idyllic village cradled in the greenery, which is disfigured due to the irregular habitat

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[8] The Shihab emirs brought Maronite peasant from Mount Lebanon to the old village to work in silk production. With the end of the Shihab emirates (1840-1842), Maronite peasants purchased the land from the emirs and the village of Chiyah persisted to be Maronite till 1920 (Khuri, 1975).

surrounding it, resulting from the State's marginalization of the migrant population in the pre-war years (Farah, 2011).

Through the collected maps from the Directorate of Geographic Affairs (Araya, Lebanon), I was able to trace Bir Hassan's urbanization from the 50s till the 90s. I have complemented these sets of maps with the available satellite maps provided by the Google Earth platform ranging from the 2000s to date. This helped me trace the development trend that occurred in the neighborhood and highlight the major periods of urbanization.

In the early 60's, the area was still considered "virgin" and the surrounding informal neighborhoods had not yet been urbanized. In 1963, the large lot, which roughly coincides to today's Bir Hassan, was privately subdivided (Figure 3, 4 and 5). As seen in figure 3, the lot was subdivided by the Kettaneh, a well-off Christian family, who was engaged in real estate development among other dimensions of the family business. The practice fell within the dominant practices of lot development during this period: large scale subdivisions were being conducted to expand the city's urban spaces and having developed over the Ramlet el Bayda area, they were expanding to the area of Jnah within the boundaries of municipalities surrounding the Lebanese capital (Fawaz, forthcoming).

Figure 3 Bir Hassan lot 4479 Subdivision (Source: Land Registry, Baabda, Lebanon)

Figure 4 Bir Hassan aerial photography of 1962 (Source: Directorate of Geographic Affairs, Lebanon)
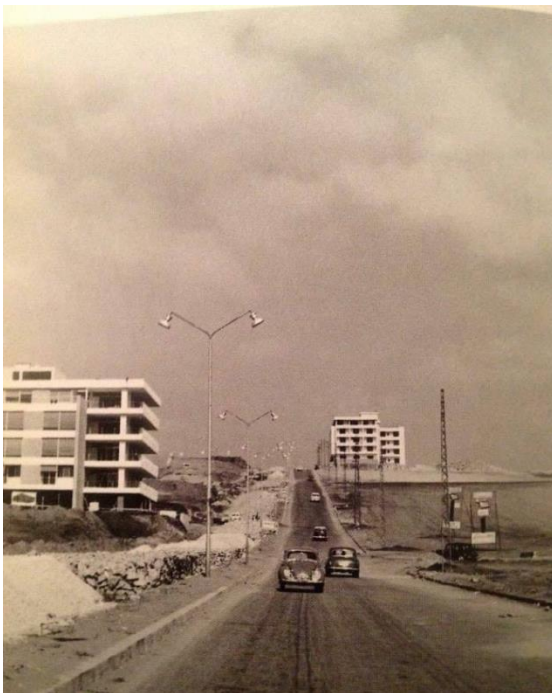
Figure 5 Sultan Ibrahim road in the 1960s, Bir Hassan (Source: Old Beirut, Facebook Page, accessed on 10/02/2019)

At that time, the coastal city and the suburbs lots subdivisions aimed to sort out property ownership, prevent illegal land occupation to penetrate and expand towards the city and prepare the land for development.

The construction activity in the area followed a clear set of planning regulations introduced to support a modern development in the city's south western suburbs: 40% of the land was reserved for the allowable building footprint area, 1.2% for the total built up area and buildings comprised of 3-storey and a roof (Table 1, Decree 2616, 14 September 1953)[9]. In the 60s, and well in line with the vision of the planners outlined in the next chapter, the Bir Hassan neighborhood was considered a prestigious residential destination, characterized by its nearby leisure services since several private beaches such as the famous Saint-Simon and Saint-Michel resorts (Figure 6) opened their doors to cater for the well-off Beirutis; along with the Camille Chamoun sports city (Figure 7) completed in 1957 to host the Arab games, and the Golf Club in 1923 (Figure 8), which was the first golf club in the Arab World.
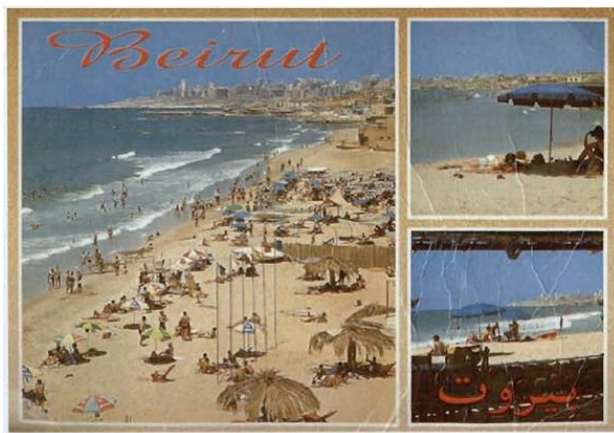
Figure 6 Postcard of Jnah in the early 1970s (Source: Lyne Jabri, 2008)

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[9] Following Ecochard's Planning Regulations for the construction of the southern suburbs in 1953 (Verdeil, 2010, p.141).

Figure 7 Beirut's Sports City in 1960 (Source : http://www.lebanoninapicture.com/pictures/beirut-sports-city-1960s)

Figure 8 The Golf Club, Bir Hassan (Source : http://www.golfcluboflebanon.com/page/7/10)

During this period, the sand dunes area witnessed an economic development that made it an integral part of the agglomeration and an important social and economic hub for the Beirut bourgeoisie. There was room for land resource, development and planning. Hence, the Bir Hassan neighborhood, surrounded by these facilities, became an attractive destination for Beirut's elites and tourists.

By the 70s, the neighborhood developed containing almost 20 buildings (Figure 9). One of the respondents (#5) who had moved to Bir Hassan in 1969 described the area as "calm, planned, religiously mixed, chic and secure".[10] At the time, Bir

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[10] Interview held on 20/05/2018.

Hassan was referred to by many city dwellers as "the area of embassies", in reference to the localization of the Moroccan Hungarian and Bulgarian embassies in this neighborhood as well as the headquarters of several UN agencies. Bir Hassan was also known to be home for a number of foreigners, including German and Italian families. The St. Simon and the St. Michel beaches, and the Golf club were important city destinations for the Beirutis. Moreover, there was a church in the neighborhood and the St. Michel supermarket (which used to sell alcohol), a major landmark that exists to date.

The eruption of the Lebanese civil war in 1975 interrupted the development occurring in the area. My analysis of aerial photography and municipal records indicates that while most of the informal settlements spread in the surrounding areas, the building activity in the neighborhood was halted and only a few units were added during this period.

Meanwhile, the eruption of the civil war precipitated the development of informal neighborhoods in the southern suburbs of Beirut. While the area had developed several small-scale informal areas before 1975, these neighborhoods welcomed a large number of displaced populations, mainly Muslim Shiites displaced by the effects of violence elsewhere in the country. Between 1975 and 1976, large population flows arrived from East Beirut and, as of 1978, more came from South Lebanon escaping the Israeli invasion. Rural migrants from the Bekaa Valley who may have been the first families to arrive continued to flow as poverty exacerbated in the area. By the mid-1980s, the number of inhabitants in the Southern-suburbs had highly increased. This was a new form of urbanization that was rapidly precipitated by Lebanon's civil war (1975-1990) and eventually led to labeling the two areas of Chiyah and Ghobeiry as

part of Beirut's southern suburbs or its "*misery belts*"[11] where poor Shiites live (Charafeddine 1987; Harb 2003).

As of the 1980s, the urban, social and political landscape of Beirut's southern suburbs changed dramatically. Known now as Dahieh, or Beirut's poor suburb, the southern suburbs became a densely populated area inhabited by an exclusively Muslim Shiite population increasingly politicized (Charafeddine 1987). By the 1990s, the suburb was also organized, having developed its own system of management of services controlled by Hezbollah (Harb 2003). Physical development in the southern suburbs area expanded chaotically, lacking planning and disrespecting building and zoning regulations. It did not have a center, nor straight streets, nor standardized buildings. On the contrary, apartment buildings were of various sizes and styles. The naming of streets and quarters did not express spatial realities but social and physical peculiarities. The area now counted numerous informal settlements (Fawaz and Peillen 2003). Conversely, by the 90s, the development activity was still slow in Bir Hassan though additional structures have been added to the area. I counted 20 buildings in total on the aerial photo of 1991 indicating that Bir Hassan was now a big undeveloped hole surrounded by large informally subdivided areas (Figure 10).

It was only in the 2000s that Bir Hassan boomed again. At the time, aerial photos show that the area witnessed rapid development (92 developed structures) and became almost fully built-up by 2004. Regardless of the Israeli war on Lebanon in 2006, the construction activity in the neighborhood was still ongoing and by 2008, the area had almost reached its full capacity (Figure 11). Development since then has risen

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[11] Belts of Misery refer to poor housing conditions, lack of utilities and services as well as access to hygiene and health care (Harb, 2003).

and the few remaining empty lots have been all built up (Figure 12). As seen on figure 13 that traced building-by-building the development of the neighborhood, 65% of Bir Hassan was built between 2000 and 2017.

Figure 9 Bir Hassan aerial photography of 1971. (Source: Directorate of Geographic Affairs, Lebanon)

Figure 10 Bir Hassan aerial photography of 1991. (Source: Directorate of Geographic Affairs, Lebanon)

Figure 11 Satellite Map of Bir Hassan provided by Google Earth (2008)

Figure 12 Satellite map of Bir Hassan provided by Google Earth (2017)

BUILDING DEVELOPMENT MAP

LEGEND

1960s	1990s	☐ Redeveloped Plot
1970s	2000s	⬚ Demolished Buildings
1980s	2010s	

Figure 13 Bir Hassan Building Development Map (Source: Samer Schinder)

C. Bir Hassan today

The Bir Hassan area is qualified by its modern zoning that imposes wide streets, relatively large plots: 900-1,500 m² (Clerc 2009) and four floor buildings aligned on the streets. The zone has a distinct morphology in comparison to adjacent neighborhoods that were mostly developed informally; its grid lines contrast with the organic morphology of the surrounding informal settlements (Figure 14 and 15). Today, only two structures from the 60s remain in the neighborhood, the St-Michel Church and a building dating back to the 60s and containing the St- Michel Supermarket.
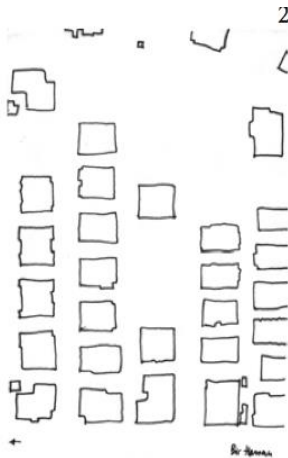
Figure 14 Morphology of Bir Hassan Neighborhood. Source: Clerc, 2009.

Figure 15 Bir Hassan building morphology (Source: Author)

a. A growing commercial hub

Ground floor and underground floors of almost every building comprise of shops catering for the daily needs of inhabitants (Figure 16 and 17). The majority of services are concentrated on the edges of the neighborhood, since few have been able to

sustain their businesses within it given the proliferation of militarized security controls after the 2013 and 2014 terrorist attacks.

Today, offices and shops catering to daily services, on the edges of the neighborhood, are abundantly increasing (Figure 16). The area that used to be strictly residential is becoming a center of its own. In addition, recreational projects are opening in the area (e.g. malls and cinemas) and many may even appeal to individuals coming from outside the area, perhaps reversing the ongoing enclaving. This could be the case of public institutions too, particularly the branch of the Lebanese University that opened its doors about four years ago. These facilities are likely to attract people from the suburbs rather than Beirut, given the scarcity of these amenities outside the city's administrative borders. It is important to note that there is a remarkable spill over in the area and a 'market trend' that is spreading from the southern suburbs of Beirut, 'Dahieh'. Many of the shops found in the area have branches in the southern suburbs, or moved from Dahieh to Bir Hassan or share the same typology. Informal conversations with shop owners show that the area does not solely cater for its residents and has widened its activity reaching the clientele of the surrounding areas of Jnah, Ouzai and Dahieh.

The newly opened shops (2010s), which provide a range of home appliance products at a cheap price (e.g. House of beauty, La2ta, American household), are mainly targeting the residents of surrounding areas. Therefore, the clientele reached is no longer middle to high income but targets also low-income households. Residents argue that the openness to development in the area attracted a new type of clientele, staff and residents, which were mainly based in the southern suburbs of Beirut, 'Dahieh'. Some of the shops have branches in Dahieh; others closed their branches and completely

relocated to Bir Hassan. However, they retained the same clientele who currently commutes from the Southern suburbs to Bir Hassan. This economic activity fostered a strong connection between the neighborhood and its surroundings, which did not exist previously. However, only 10 of the neighborhoods residents purchase goods from the area and in most cases, only emergency grocery, from the supermarket. Many of the respondents do not actually visit the supermarkets in the area but only order delivery. In addition, the cafes and squares in the area seem to attract a lower class clientele, more popular than the average dweller of Bir Hassan. As a result, 17 of respondents do not sit in any square or café in the area. Instead, most of the available entertainment facilities are used by outsiders and rarely by the neighborhood's residents.

Figure 16 Commercial activity on the ground floor in the Bir Hassan neighborhood (Source: Author, 2018)

LEGEND

Restaurant	Institutions	Gas Station	Embassy	American Brands Shop
Pharmacy	Car Repair Shop	Variety Shop	Beauty Parlor	
Bank	Clothes Outlet	Supermarket	Enterntainment	

Figure 17 Bir Hassan Building Use Map (Author: Samer Schinder)

Residents in Bir Hassan reside in secure housing units. Most of the residential projects are promoted under three main headlines: security, privacy and luxury. The latter are delivered first, through the physical aspects of the buildings (e.g. wall, fences, gates…); second the social aspect (homogeneous sectarian group); third the economic aspect (suburban, self-sufficient) and fourth the political aspect (control of political parties and securitization).

The sample of building development permits I obtained from the municipality (Appendix 2) showed that the trend in development not only changed on the level of the physical aspect of the building but also on the level of developers operating in the area. For instance, I was able to trace permit owners origins through their family names, which were in majority Christian and Sunni between the 70s-80s. The trend changed as of the 90s whereby Shiite family names appear abundantly in the building permit list of 90s. Although the list I retrieved from the municipality was not exhaustive (63 permits), it did it indicate the trend occurring in the neighborhood to a certain extent. The fieldwork complemented the list and revealed that all operating developers in the area are exclusively Shiite. In Chapter 5, I trace and analyze the current developers origins and activities in the Bir Hassan neighborhood.

D. Conclusion

In this chapter, I traced the three phases of development of the Bir Hassan neighborhood: its transition from a pre-planned area of the southwestern suburbs of Beirut under the Sultanates in the early 1900s, a village to a suburb of Beirut in the 60s, to finally becoming Dahieh's suburb in the 2000s: its current status. I furthermore showed how the formation of informal settlements affected the place of the

neighborhood in the city on the level of building development trends, building use (commercial activity) and interaction with the surrounding areas.

In the upcoming chapter, I will examine the three phases of Beirut's planning history, which affected the development of the Bir Hassan neighborhood into a Dahieh suburb.

CHAPTER

III. BIR HASSAN IN THE URBAN PLANS OF THE CITY

This chapter narrates the place of Bir Hassan in the urban plans of the city. The three narratives in which the neighborhood is recounted reflect eloquently the three differing positions of the neighborhood in the Greater Urban Area: (1) A promising suburb of Beirut, (2) A threatened zone amidst extensive squatting, and (3) An enclaved Shiite neighborhood.

A. Bir Hassan in Beirut's Early Planning History: A Promising Suburb (1920-1970)

As early as 1906, A Lebanese engineer based in Cairo, Neghib Chakkour Pacha, had proposed in this area the development of "Bayrut al-Jadida", a new district. The vision was comparable in its inspiration to Heliopolis, the new desert-based city in northeast Cairo (Clerc 2002, p. 207). He started buying land for this purpose. The project, which was put on hold during the First World War, resurfaced in the years 1927-1930, but was ultimately abandoned (Ibid. p.208). This first sketch of a new city inspired the French urban planners to develop designs for the same area (Verdeil 2010). The French geographer Eric Verdeil (2010) reconstructed the plans for the southwestern suburbs, one the main projects for Beirut urban planners. This area was considered, under the French mandate, by city planners as an exceptional opportunity to build a city, planned according to the most modern spatial organization standards and the most voluntaristic legal mechanisms. Verdeil (2010) describes Michel Ecochard's proposal as

a more ambitious plan. Since the 1940s, Bir Hassan and its surrounding sand dunes had become the site of fulfillment for the ambitions of modernist city planners invested in finding new expansion areas for Lebanon's capital (Verdeil 2010). The southwestern suburb, so-called "virginity" (Clerc 2009), was structured by large and gradually densified agricultural villages. Consequently, as of the French Mandate and throughout the first three decades of Lebanon's independence, this area was seen as a potential territory to absorb the city's expanding urbanization (Ibid.). Several French and Lebanese urban planners saw in this zone an exceptional opportunity to build developments, planned in line with the modern standards of spatial organization (Verdeil 2010). The successive plans for the southern suburbs (e.g. Danger, Ecochard, Cite de la Gouvernement) testify to the evolution of modes and references in urban planning. Among those, two plans stand out: Plan Danger (1931-1932) and Ecochard's master plan (1941-1944) during the Mandate period (Verdeil, 2010). Inspired by the Garden City model, the two plans were based on the idea of creating a "new city" (Ibid.). I refer to Eric Verdeil's (2010) work "*Beyrouth et ses urbanistes: Une ville en plans (1946-1975)*" to document the planning history of the Southwestern suburbs.

The garden city concept is explicitly invoked in Danger's plans, but also present in Ecochard's, through the enunciation of landscape principles (Verdeil 2010, p.137). The theme of the garden city was omnipresent in the urban planning of the twenties and thirties in Europe (Verdeil 2010). It had a hygienist dimension and was the bearer of a progressive ideology whose values and spatial order contrasted with the disorder of the built area of Beirut (p.45). The planning of roads, the control of densities and architectural forms added to this contrast. Verdeil argue that the second dimension of this new city was social, particularly in Ecochard's plans, introducing city spaces for

the "working population". Within this framework, Verdeil assumes that Bir Hassan played the role of an extension district, which Ecochard planned to connect directly to the city center with a tramline (p.102). The plans of Danger and Ecochard adopted different approaches. The first was a cabinetwork, largely carried out in Paris. It was based on a grid analysis, and a fairly limited field analysis with a primary focus on hygiene (p.29). Ecochard's commitment on the ground probably made him more attentive and more aware of local issues, particularly in terms of land (p.96). In both cases, if the choice to build a new city was based on the observation of a virgin zone with indisputable landscape assets, it was articulated with local project proposals and land opportunities schemes (p.117).

The first airport of Beirut, built in 1931 in Bir Hassan, was rapidly outgrown by the city, and as of 1941, plans for its expansion and displacement further away from the city were developed (p.138). Ecochard proposed to move the airport a few miles South, from Bir Hassan to Khalde, where it is currently located. The grounds of the former airport became a land reserve, likely to host extensive development. It was studied extensively from 1947 under the direction of Ernst Egli, before being finally approved on September 9, 1953, under the leadership of Gabriel Char (p.139). In an area stretching from the Beirut Belt Boulevard in the Mazraa-Mar Elias section to the new airport, the decree included a road plan with building regulations distinguishing different zones. This appears to be the first zoning approved in Lebanon (p.141).

In Verdeil's narrative, he describes technical and political bodies becoming increasingly interested in the sand dunes area where the Bir Hassan neighborhood is located. The area had a potential for new functions and uses (p.144). The prospect of residential urbanization was also essential and accounted for. The mention of Heliopolis

in the press, pointed to the speculative fever of land actors and developers (p.138). The zone slowly developed and opened up with the introduction of new arteries. In 1957, a new coastal road connecting towards Saïda constituted a milestone. Bir Hassan became progressively part of the agglomeration.

Michel Ecochard's plan for the government cities in 1961 was the culmination of this movement of integrating into the agglomeration (p.98). As the area remained largely empty, and situated on the margins of an agglomeration with strong growth, the idea of using it was undisputedly necessary. With previous proposals supporting this ideology of a dense and organized urbanization, it became clear that the planned continuation of a denser road network would not be sufficient to cope with the city's growth.

In 1958, Constantinos Doxiadis (Greek architect and planner) was commissioned by the Camille Chamoun government to plan the extension of Beirut, more specifically to house the "*Cite de la Gouvernement*[12]", in one of four possible sites (p.43). His proposal was put on hold and transferred to Ecochard following the selection of Bir Hassan neighborhood as the project's potential location. In 1961, Ecochard was commissioned by the Lebanese Republic to provide a comprehensive plan for the city and its suburbs, slightly modifying Doxiadis original proposal. The "*Cite de la Gouvernement*" comprehended a linear southward expansion along Beirut's western coastline towards the airport, leading to the urbanization of the large sand dunes located south of the city. It is worth noting that by then, the Southern Suburbs of Beirut were already beginning to host a growing number of low-income settlements including refugee camps (Clerc 2009). While the latter were not in close proximity to Bir Hassan,

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[12] The 'Cite de la Gouvernement' is house to a large urban complex of ministries.

they still occupied a substantial space in the area. The plan carefully avoided the urbanized areas in Beirut's South and had no intention to intervene on behalf of the state to neither regularize, nor provide infrastructure or integrate the city's slums (Ibid.). To the contrary, it generated an exclusive urban area separated from its neighboring districts by a large green boulevard, obstructing access and view. In 1962, Ecochard presented a revised master plan for Beirut and its suburbs to the Directorate General of Urbanism (Figure 18). The scheme comprised of a complete infrastructural plan: connection of the city to its suburbs through an integrated National Highway System, infrastructure plans and three new satellite cities in the southern area that could house up to 800,000 inhabitants (Verdeil, p.93). The refugee camps were almost entirely excluded from this planning initiative. The civil war in 1975 put on hold the plans for Beirut southern suburbs, all schemes needed to be revisited as per the reality on ground.
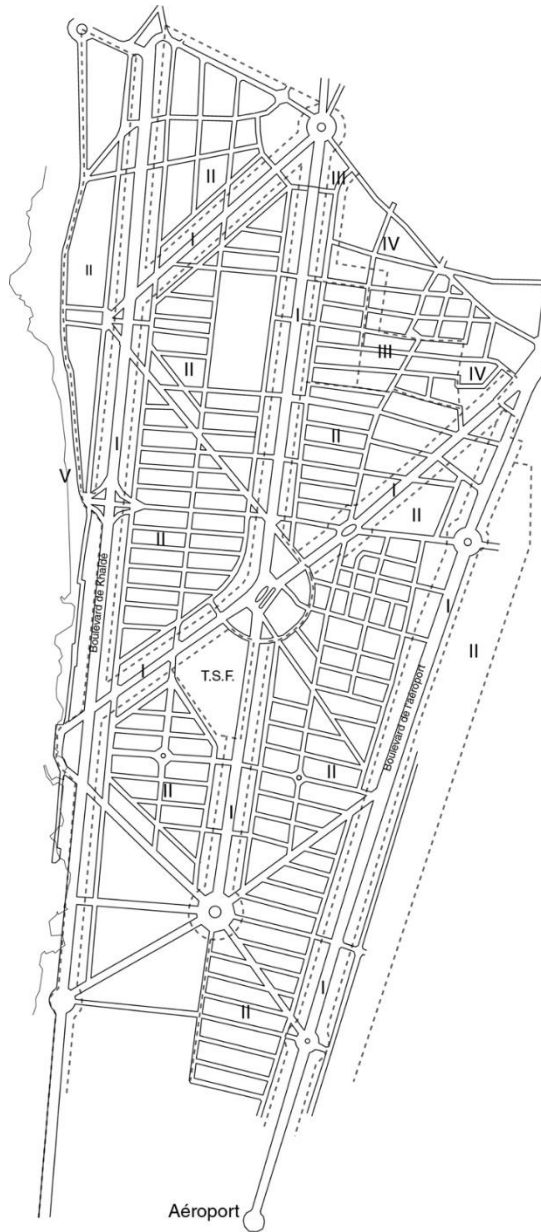
Figure 18 Ecochard Master Plan for the Southern Suburbs in 1961 (Verdeil 2010)

Allowable building footprint	Total built up area	Floors
40%	1.2%	3 + Roof

Table 1 Decree 2616, 14 September 1953 following Ecochard's planning regulations for the construction of the southern suburbs in 1953 (Verdeil, 2010, p.141)

B. Recovering Beirut's South Western Suburbs and the Elyssar project (1990-2000)

The Lebanese civil war radically transformed the reality of Bir Hassan and its surroundings. What could have been imagined in the 1950s as a posh suburb of the Lebanese capital with its own golf course and nearby resorts was now a well-delineated modern lot subdivision surrounded by a sea of informal settlements, refugee camps, and other forms of ad-hoc urbanization. In this context, the central state planning response departed from earlier projections to integrate Bir Hassan within a larger public redevelopment scheme that primarily aimed at recovering sea-front prime property occupied by squatters during the war. Amidst heavy negotiations between central state agencies and political forces controlling the area (Harb 1998), the Elyssar project was launched in 1995. The public agency Elyssar was created in 1996 under decree number 9043 in 30/08/1996, and in 1997, decree number 10231 was issued ratifying the Master Plan and the implementation schemes for the Elyssar area (Figure 19 and Table 2). The political agreement around this project made it possible in the mid-1990s to stop the spread of the informal neighborhoods and has allowed the State to intervene in the southern suburbs (Harb 1998). This was achieved by providing a right to relocation and compensations to residents and owners of constructions (Elyssar 2000). The agency is administratively and financially independent. Three groups of actors lead the board of administration with six members and one director. Four members are designated according to their sectarian affiliations. One is from the Amal movement, the other from the Hezbollah party. Residents also have stakes in the project and form two categories: those living or owning legal land, and those living on illegal land. In addition, religious organizations that own large parcels of land are representatives in the national assembly

and the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), which administers infrastructure projects and roadwork. The municipalities, on the other hand, did not participate in this project (Elyssar 2000). The main aim of Elyssar was to address the illegal land occupation through allocating housing for squatters. This allowed the re-imagination of the southern suburbs as an extension of Beirut in the pre-war area. This is well in line with what was initially planned for Bir Hassan, as part of the same plan as Elyssar developed by the French planners.

Just like Ecochard's plans had carried the dreams of a modern suburb, Elyssar's project can be described as an example of inclusive urban governance (Harb 2003). It recognizes the right of low-income city squatters since their displacement was conditioned by housing redevelopment. The rationale behind this project was post-war reconstruction and urban modernity. It failed however, since, in line with other post-war projects (e.g. Solidere project in Downtown Beirut, Linord), its real aim was a speculative real estate investment rather than a serious engagement with post-war urban challenges (Beyhum 1995).

Figure 19 Elyssar Master Plan for the Southern in Suburbs in 1997 (Decree 10231, Elyssar, 1997)

Allowable building footprint	Total built up area	Floors
40%	1.4%	7

Table 2 Decree 10231, 09/05/1997 (Elyssar, 1997)

A retired official from the DGU argued that the establishment of Elyssar costs the state loosing from legitimacy in the area of the Southern suburbs, whereby the political parties (Amal and Hezbollah), became the legitimate actors deciding on the planning and management of the area. In this framework, Elyssar rendered a "political product" rather than a developmental one. Amidst heavy political tensions between various political stakeholders and the reluctance of the Shiite political parties to release

any power from their territories (Harb, 2000), Elyssar was born dead. Aside from allowing more intensive building developments through its master plan, the project never materialized. Instead, urbanization in these areas of the suburbs occurred chaotically and at a rapid pace, leading to the fast deterioration of the physical fabric and the natural environment (e.g. outdated infrastructure) – except for Bir Hassan, which continued to act as an enclave of higher income residents despite its surroundings. The political parties' monopoly over the area eventually brought the next phase of planning.

C. Planning Bir Hassan as the suburb of Dahieh, the rule of political parties (2000-todate)

Since the mid 2000s, planning in Beirut has become a central domain of contestation between religious-political organizations, governments, and profit-seeking developers (Bou Akar 2018). Bir Hassan does not escape the trend. In this final phase of development, we see the neighborhood gradually fall under the jurisdiction of the two Shiite parties who are now the parties thinking of its "planning". Consequently, its planning – through the offices of the Municipality of Ghobeiry – is highly intertwined with the ongoing territorialization of the city and its securitization in the hands of political parties. It is worth pointing out that both Amal and Hezbollah have played roles as "planners" in the Southern Suburbs of the city.

1. Amal and Hezbollah: "Planners" of the Southern Suburbs

Hezbollah[13] had begun to play a role as "planner" in Dahieh as of 1988 (Fawaz 2005, Harb 1996) particularly through '*Jihad al-Bina'* ' that was providing services like garbage collection and water provision (Harb 2010, p.111). This role eventually brought the Party to the leadership of local municipalities (Harb 2009). The Hezbollah team arrived at the head of the largest municipality in the southern suburb "the Municipality of Ghobeiry" in 1998 (Farah, p.429; Harb, p.121). In 2001, Hezbollah set up the Municipal Work Committee, a central structure whose purpose is to supervise and "guide" (*Irshad*) its municipal councils. The local governments led by the Hezbollah municipal councils works along two priority axes: the strengthening of the institutional framework and the consolidation of the society of the Resistance (Harb 2009.).

Amal, on the other hand, emerged in the 1980s, as a militia, and in 1984, became a professionalized group of wage earners with access to a wide range of resources, including that of the state (Harb 2010, p.54). The nature of the movement gradually changed as they engaged in economic management and speculation, where they set up profitable structures that worked alongside the state (port, airport, etc.) to redistribute public resources to the disposed Shiite community (p.55).

In her book "*Le Hezbollah a Beirut (1985-2005): De la banlieue a la ville*", Mona Harb (2010) contrasts, Hezbollah's decision to set up its own system of action and distribute community services and other resources through alternative organizations, to Amal's strategy to graft onto state organizations for access to services

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[13] Hezbollah is the product of academics that come together in the '70s inspired by the writing of Sayyid Fadlallah. In 1985, the party announces its political program "the Islamic revolution in Lebanon"; a Shiite Islamic resistance that is directed against Israel and all those who support Israel in its plans (Harb, 2010, p.59).

(p.76). Through these different forms, Harb argues that planning in the Southern Suburbs of Beirut since the mid-1990s can be described as powerfully orchestrated by these parties who play critical roles in the organization of this area. This includes the participation on the board of the 'Elyssar' agency, making these two parties the representatives of city dwellers in this area of the city (Harb 2001).

After the Israeli war on Lebanon in 2006, Hezbollah took charge of reconstructing the demolished buildings and areas in the southern suburbs, independently of public agencies. The Party appointed two of its most trusted cadres to develop a reconstruction strategy, which led to the establishment of a private development agency: *Wa'd*. (Harb and Fawaz 2010). This established Hezbollah's role as planner, as argued by Fawaz (2009) who wrote: "Hezbollah's intervention in the realm of urban planning was considerably strengthened in the past two decades, as party officials began to occupy official positions in Lebanese public agencies and institutions" (Fawaz 2009, p.325-324). Furthermore, it is said that Hezbollah coordinates a network of affiliated property developers who are deeply involved in Beirut's real estate markets. These developers have the financial capacity to buy and develop land (sometimes with subsidies from Hezbollah). This has led to the massive urbanization of peripheral areas adjacent to Dahieh, and to a corresponding skyrocketing of real estate values in that area, creating concerns among members of the other sectarian groups (Harb 2010; Bou Akar 2018).

D. Conclusion

In this chapter I have traced Bir Hassan's planning history, under the leadership of the French planners (1920-1970s), the public agency Elyssar (90s), and the

ruling political parties (2000s). By the end of the 90s with the arrival of the Hezbollah

party to the municipal board, the Bir Hassan neighborhood become exclusively planned

by both Amal and Hezbollah who conceive its planning and spatial organization. Hence,

in the following chapter, I will document how the political parties have been acting as

the exclusive planners of the neighborhood.

CHAPTER

IV. THE MAKING OF THE SHIITE ENCLAVE (SINCE 2000)

In Beirut, planning has become a central domain of contest between religious-political organizations, governments, and profit-seeking developers (Bou Akar, 2018) (e.g. Bachoura, Sahra El Choueifat, Solidere and Tarik el Jdide). Both Amal and Hezbollah are actively engaged in creating "political and religious spaces" in the southern suburbs, seeking Dahieh's territorial expansion, which can be seen, as a 'Shiite encroachment on the territories of other sectarian groups and a challenge to their existence in the city (Bou Akar 2018, p.17).

In this chapter, I argue that the Bir Hassan neighborhood became the legitimate territory for the rule of the Amal movement, which imposed its own logic and power on how space should be appropriated and governed by deploying its security apparatuses in the area, controlling the mobility of residents and outsiders, and fostering a "sectarian" identity for the neighborhood through, for instance, the renaming of streets and display of political leaders pictures. The movement working closely with the municipality of Ghobeiry (on the level of security and development) and property developers (who are affiliated to the part), in the area was able to foster a Shiite enclaved Bir Hassan neighborhood.

A. Role of the Amal Movement in the making of the Shiite enclave

The Amal movement has been operating in the Bir Hassan neighborhood since its establishment and is quite active in the surrounding areas, with a great presence in Khaldeh and Ouzai. Initially, Amal's reinforcement in the southwestern suburbs was in

response to the absenteeism of the State on the level of service provision (refer to the previous chapter, IV).

In the Bir Hassan neighborhood the presence of the movement was strengthened, on the one hand, through the municipality's support and the presence of politicians residing in the neighborhood; and on the other hand, through the support of developers, which offered the land for the movement to build its headquarters in 2014. The presence of the movement in Bir Hassan, furthermore, granted a safe and secure environment for the 'Shiite' residents in the area who associate to its ideology.

Discussions with one of the movement's representatives highlighted all the above.[14]

The respondent indicated that the movement is actively engaged in service provision for the residents of the neighborhood. He explained that Amal was securing access to water, Internet, and satellite but was unable to secure electricity received through private generators. However these services are not offered for free, and extend only to those affiliated Amal representatives. This information was further confirmed by one of the interviewed residents who recognized the fact that her satellite supplier is affiliated to the Movement. The resident further indicated that her supplier was referred to as the "Haj", and that she didn't even know his name. Whether she meant to hide his name because she felt insecure or whether she really didn't know his name is unclear to me. However it was evident that she identified her service provider as a member of the Movement. She described him as a reserved man in his 50s, with a white beard and a ring on his finger. He sends young men on his behalf for the monthly subscription fees. The latter are residents from the surrounding informal areas, recruited by the movement

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[14] Interview held on 05/08/2018.

(Respondent #3). Other residents avoided altogether to engage in political and sectarian discussions, however most of them acknowledged the fact that the movement is actively engaged in service provision.

In addition to the provision of services, the Amal Movement is particularly present in the neighborhood through its security deployment. Fawaz, Harb and Gharbieh (2012) argue that there are five types of threats that justify the deployment of security by political parties in Beirut's neighborhoods. The first threat is linked to political figures and public buildings (e.g. Embassies, Banks) that deploy police agents and private security agents for assuring protection. The second threat is of riots secured by army tanks and personnel. As for the third threat, it is associated to sectarian neighborhoods' attacks where neighborhood committees and local residents insure safety and security. The fourth threat is related to developments that are secured by private security apparatuses. The final threat is that of the resistance security, deployed by the Hezbollah party, and the Amal movement in the case of Bir Hassan, through neighborhood dwellers, patrols and hidden cameras. Amal's presence was heighted after the terrorist attacks of 2013 and 2014, which changed the character of the neighborhood considerably. Indeed, since then, Amal has found a pretext to heavily deploy its security apparatuses and implemented various tools for security in Bir Hassan, such as metal detectors, armored tanks, fortified walls, sandbags, and mental booths (Figure 20).

Figure 20 Amal Security checkpoints in Bir Hassan (Source: Author, 2018)

Consequently, four security checkpoints mark the main entrances to the Bir Hassan neighborhood, with metallic gates and armed men screening all movement to/out of the neighborhood. This militarized security generated fear among residents and made the area unappealing to outsiders. These checkpoints also formed physical obstacles for people coming in and out of the neighborhood whether living inside or outside. In addition to controlling entries, the Amal Movement also opted to monitor closely the population within the area. As a result, barriers, fences, barbed wires, and CCTV cameras were brought into the area. Most of the roads are no longer accessible and/or blocked by large concrete blocks. Some of them were also turned into dead ends. Guard watch houses are located on each corner and the guards decide on who gets in and out of the neighborhood (Figure 22). Thus, the neighborhood character shifted from a residential area to a security zone. In line with the statement of the Mayor, the movement's representative stated that the municipality has no say when it comes to the implementation of checkpoints; this is exclusively the decision of the Amal movement and is for security purposes.

A third strategy by the Amal Movement has been to change road names in the neighborhood. This practice may have started earlier in other sections of Beirut's

suburbs but in Bir Hassan, residents were only faced with these changes over the past decade. Thus, the well-known St-Simon Street, connecting this historical landmark to the Embassy of Kuwait and widely identified as the Saint Simon Street was labeled with large signs as the "Imam Moussa Sader Street", referring to the Shiite religious leader who founded the Amal movement.

During a conversation held with the Mayor of the Municipality of Ghobeiry, I asked him why the road names had been changed over the past five years. He replied arguing that this practice fell well in line with similar practices elsewhere, dismissing its importance as changing the character of the neighborhood:

> "*In Lebanon, there's a tendency to name roads after landmarks or important events. This is everywhere in Lebanon and not particular to the context of the Bir Hassan neighborhood*"

To me, the change in the naming of streets is nonetheless a political affirmation, which reflects the sectarian nature of the neighborhood: A Shiite territory. I wondered if that too was conducted by the Movement alone and inquired with the Amal representative who explained that for renaming a street, the movement has to file a request for changing the name of a street to the municipality, who executes its as long as it fits the vision of enabling development in the area. My interlocutor further explained that it was typically the Speaker of the House and the Amal Movement leader, MP Nabih Berri, who orders the renaming of streets. He noted that there were nonetheless circumstances when the municipality opts to make a "a generous gift", showing compassion and submissiveness to the movement's rule. The physical change is hence not limited to the naming of streets but also to the increased representation of political leader pictures in the neighborhood, particularly MP Nabih Berri, current Speaker of the

House and head of the Amal movement; and to the proliferation of the Amal movement

flags, which are also publicly visible (Figure 21).

Figure 21 Markers of the Shiite enclave in the area (Source: Author, 2018)

BIR HASSAN SECURTIY MAP

LEGEND

X — Dead-Ends
ΥΥ — Barriers
🏛 — Iranian Embassy
🏛 — Yemen Embassy
▨ — Inaccessible Zones/Blocked by Concrete
● — Previous Bir Hassan Bombing Locations
➤ — Fencing/Barbed Wires
♟ — Guard Watchhouses
📹 — CCTV Cameras
Ⓑ — Amal Party Checkpoint
🏴 — Army Checkpoint
🏴 — Hezbollah Checkpoint

Figure 22 Bir Hassan Map (Source: Samer Schinder)

B. Perception of security in Bir Hassan

Many current residents do not feel represented by the characteristics of the area: a securitized square promoting a Shiite identity with the proliferation of Amal movement flags, leaders pictures, philanthropic boxes, and labeling of streets. Residents feel offended by this political but also religious environment.

Informal discussions with twenty dwellers in the Bir Hassan neighborhood indicate that they look at the political tagging of the neighborhood and securitization with mixed feelings: some find that it has provided them with a sense of security (11/20) and strengthened their sense of belonging to the area. Others feel overtaken and consider moving out (9/20). However, security in this context is controversial whereas a Shiite would feel safe, a Sunni or Christian might not feel the same way. As a matter of fact, it is said that a Christian family has been evicted by force from the area and threatened by the Amal movement. Gender is also critical when it comes to security and safety, whereas a man would feel safe, a women might not feel the same way.

Much to my surprise, security checkpoints were conceived positively by many of my respondents because they blocked the commercial activity from penetrating the neighborhood and disrupting its residential character. Therefore, several residents saw it as maintaining the area's calm, quiet and desirable residential character. It furthermore enhanced the neighborhood identity as exclusively for the residents of Bir Hassan since no one will enter the neighborhood if not a resident or a visitor of the resident. Even residents living on the edges of the neighborhood avoid going into the neighborhood. One of the residents who used to pass by the internal streets of the area to reach the gas station, no longer does since she feels 'looked at' as an outsider though she lives on the edges of the neighborhood. The security checkpoints are mostly regarded as a negative

addition in the area because they affect the residents' daily practices, as twelve of my sample affirms. The area had originally multiple entrances, as highlighted by one of the respondents, which could reach his house from ten different entrances stating, "Bir Hassan is more like an island which has multiple entrances and exits" (Respondent #12)[15].

However, with the proliferation of security residents have been bounded to few streets to reach and exit the area. In addition, they are subject to profiling and questioning by the Amal and Hezbollah security checkpoints. Though the security guards are now familiar with residents in the area, the feeling of being observed and keeping track of residents daily commuting activity was described by the majority of respondents as 'highly disturbing'. It is noticeable that resentment towards securitization was particularly strong among the residents who came to the neighborhood in the 80s and 90s. One of them described the presence of the parties as "repulsive", and described a movement that had found a purpose few years ago to deploy its security apparatuses in the area to be asking him, a resident for over 30 years now in the area, "where are you heading?". Another respondent had actually commented on the fact that security guards are teenage boys and he found it 'offensive' to be questioned by them.

Moreover, security is perceived as a negative addition to the neighborhood by some of the respondents since it created a physical barrier for relatives and friends visiting them. Outsiders avoid coming into the neighborhood as reported by thirteen of the respondents, even the four who had moved out of the area do not come anymore to the neighborhood, not even to visit their own families. Many of them reported actually

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[15] Interview held on 07/08/2018

that they hate the neighborhood. One of the respondents also pointed out the fact that since the deployment of security, the area for outsiders seems unreachable. For instance, if you share your location with a friend to pick you up he will never reach your place since Google maps does not take into consideration the several checkpoints and closed roads. Therefore she feels it's a hassle, people would get lost, since they are not familiar with the neighborhood's accessibility scheme. Despite these strong reactions, some of the respondents expressed strong satisfaction with the security apparatuses in the area. They did not avoid the checkpoints; they know the security guards very well and purposely pass through them. They feel that the security guards are the guardians of the neighborhood; they stay up all night to make sure that the area is safe and secure. They prevent access for outsiders to an extent that one of the respondents highlighted that she could sleep with her door open and be sure that no one will ever go into her house, it is that safe! The area needed this tight security as it is surrounded by major informal neighborhoods, and previously did not feel safe. Many of the respondents reported that people "from outside" used to come and sit in cafes disturbing the residents of the area, especially girls. Also, since the Iranian embassy is a target and is located in the neighborhood, some of the residents felt that security is a must. Finally, sixteen out of the 20 interviewed residents perceived that the proliferation of security in the neighborhood did actually foster a Shiite neighborhood firstly since the security is tight up to the Amal and Hezbollah political parties and secondly since most of the residents in the neighborhood are Shiite. One of the residents highlighted the fact that: "Security officers are all employed by the Iranian Embassy. They were a few and naturally after the attacks tripled in number" (Respondent #7)[16].

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[16] Interview held on 10/05/2018

Residents' who moved to the neighborhood after the 2000s do not consider relocating while residents' who lived in the area before the 2000s have either already moved out, considering moving out or are at a stage where moving out is no longer an option, however their children relocated.

C. Municipal governance: the legal tool for permitting the enclaving process

Since the 1990s, the decentralization literature has strongly emphasized the role of local authorities in the planning process. As such, municipalities can play an important role in planning cities on various levels (e.g. developments, infrastructure planning, street renaming and responding to crisis). These high aspirations for municipalities may have materialized in a few success stories where participatory budgeting (Abers 1996) and/or local improvements were successful (Tendler 1997). In many other cases, however, national governments have been reluctant to devolve power while local authorities have remained too close to local elites to actually provide good planning (Favier 2001). This is particularly the case in Lebanon where municipalities have often been denounced to use their local power in order to promote the political and social agenda of political parties (Harb 2009).

From the iconographic marking of the space with banners, statues and images to the change of names of streets and squares highlighting the political leaders of the party, Harb (2010) and Farah (2011) have shown how the municipal authorities reinforce the parties' representation in its territorial hold and in its local power (Ibid.). In the case of Bir Hassan, the Ghobeiry municipality endorsed the cultural and social practices associated with the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon by creating municipal commissions that work to reinforce its visibility.

The municipality claims to be active in the area working on infrastructure projects such as the rehabilitation and expansion of the airport road towards Rihab, creating traffic conversions in Boulevard Hafez Assad and infrastructure maintenance. It collaborates with all living forces in the area: political, social, and cultural; and mirrors the political parties' ideologies. It has furthermore a strong relationship with developers in the area and facilitates the implementation of both developers and political parties' activities in the neighborhood. As stated by Farah (2019): "*Dig into municipalities background, they are all either developers themselves or close to the developers*".

The municipality has no say when it comes to security such as the deployment of checkpoints, the arrest of Syrians or the eviction of Christian and Sunni residents from the neighborhood. All these 'illegal' activities are undertaken by the Amal movement, supported/covered informally/indirectly by the municipality.

The municipality is currently working on initiating neighborhood committees and started the establishment of a hotline for the residents in case of emergencies (1725). However, this initiative hasn't been openly shared with the public as many of the residents of Bir Hassan are not aware of it. The municipality has furthermore supported the security forces to remove the violations in the vicinity of Sultan Ibrahim. It is following up on the development of plans for the area, which licenses a number of retailers and removes others (mainly Syrians and migrant workers). The municipality has also expanded the road under the bridge of Sultan Ibrahim and removed the trucks from under the bridge to another new location in order to facilitate traffic at the roundabout. The municipality claims to have several ongoing activities in the neighborhood, which aim to improve residents' quality of life, traffic and infrastructure.

However, ten of the interviewed Bir Hassan's residents are not satisfied with municipal services and thirteen rated the municipality's activity as inactive and 19 are unaware of any current projects in the area.

The municipality of Ghobeiry is highly active in the field of development and education. It is proud of the area's real estate boom, the land investments of expatriate and local Shiite entrepreneurs, and those of Gulf Arabs in the western part of the commune (Harb 2009). It is working on extending its activity towards the coast, which is currently occupied by informal housing. The municipality relies on a neoliberal economic logic, which favors private capital investment and manages urban space in order to increase real estate value (Harb 2009). The municipality has been actively working on infrastructure and beautification projects in the area of Bir Hassan. As highlighted by Harb (2009), the specificity of the management practices of Hezbollah mayors is not Islamist.

Furthermore, the municipality's general strategy relies on the purchase of land (Harb 2009). Recently, it coveted the Golf Club's [17] parking space (public land) to turn it into an exhibition room "*Ghobex*" (Figure 23). This was achieved after winning the proceeding over the Ouzai area (containing the Golf course) against the municipality of Borj al-Barajneh, following a heavy interference of political parties in 2016, resorting in the demarcation of the new municipal borders for both parties.

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[17] The Golf club is a non-profit organization that was founded in 1923 registered by the American Consul and a group of Lebanese notables, under 'Sporting Club of Beirut (Golf)' (Golf Club of Lebanon, 2017). With the explosions of 2013 and 2014 that occurred in the Bir Hassan neighborhood, the golf club lost 250 families many of whom are Christians residing in municipal Beirut. Today is clientele mostly comprise of middle-income Shiite, a great number of whom reside in the Bir Hassan neighborhood (Salam, 2018).

Figure 23 Ghobex, Ghobeiry Exhibition Center (Source :
http://www.ghobeiry.gov.lb/12992)

The Ghobeiry and the Borj al-Barajneh municipalities agreed to divide the
Ouzai area into two parts. The first part extends from the golf course to the shrine of
Imam al-Ouzai, which is located within the Ghobeiry municipal boundaries; the second
part extends from the northern side of the old airport road towards Beirut and is under
the jurisdiction of the Borj al-Barajneh municipality. According to some, the Ouzai land
belongs to the municipality of Borj al-Barajneh, and the Ghobeiry municipality is trying
to obtain this area to gain the golf course, which is considered a touristic destination (Al
Modon 2016)[18] but also to make a political statement. Moreover, the decision of
relocating the Iranian Embassy near the Golf club is threatening the sustainability of the
club and its presence in the area. The Golf game is imbedded in a certain elite culture

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[18] Al Modon, 2016. (Retrieved from:
https://www.almodon.com/politics/2016/9/6/%D8%AD%D8%B2%D8%A8-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%87-%D9%8A%D8%AD%D8%B3%D9%85-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%BA%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%8A-
%D9%88%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%AC-
%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A8%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%86%D8%A9)

and is most likely threatened in relation to the context of the area's surroundings. Hence, while being good students of local governance, the Hezbollah municipalities strengthen their territorial hegemony and confirm the exclusion of local residents who do not belong to their world (Harb 2003).

D. Building development as an enclaving tool: The role of Property Developers

Enclaves are both demand-led and supply-led. On the one hand, residents search for "security and privacy" when looking for places of residency. On the other hand, development businesses thrive on segregation as they market and advertise "segregated or exclusive" spaces as better and safer places to live in (Caldeira 2012).

In Lebanon, private developments have been encouraged as early as the 90's with the Hariri government agenda for enhancing the development of the capital Beirut. Therefore, a large sum of money was spent on road infrastructures and other recreational and residential buildings. Furthermore, several businessmen and influential politicians engaged in channeling the immigrants' capital in the urban economy, more specifically in the real-estate sector (Refer to the case of the Beydoun family in Marie-Claude Souaid, 1997). In this sense, developers have been recasting the city as a network of privatized enclaves. They operate under the act of viability, which is a sort of bureaucratic alchemy to conjure any outcome desired (Wainwright, 2014). If developers cannot get local authorities to approve schemes, they can get the approval of the latter through the mayor, the government, or the political parties, which renders the planning system relying on individual negotiation between private and public servants, as I will document in the case of Bir Hassan.

In order to trace building development trends in the Bir Hassan neighborhood, and identify the main developers, I relied on the collected building permits from municipal records and the list of property owners who had filed for these permits provided by the municipality of Ghobeiry. I started by profiling property owners by looking at family (or last) names. In Lebanon, last names provide a reliable source of information to trace religious/sectarian classifications. They also help trace areas of origin for each of the developers. By crossing these identifiers with building activities, I was able to identify two phases in the neighborhood's development.

I organized the first phase to extend between 1970-1990, covering the pre and civil war periods. At the time, developers carried last names such as Anouti, Fakhri and Sekariyeh and middle names such as Josiette and Elias are commonly listed. By inquiring about family names in the voters' registration records, I learned that these families are mostly Sunni and Christian names. The second phase, which I consider to start in the 1990s, corresponds to a shift in the name of the developers with predominantly last names such as Achour, Tajjedine, Darwish, and Hammoud, middle names with Muslim connotation (typically Shiite) such as Ali, Hassan, Mohamad, Haidar and Hussein are listed as the landowners filling for permits in the neighborhood.

Crossing the periods with the building activities, one sees that the 1970-1990 period also showed property owners typically building a single development they expected to occupy. On the parallel road to the *Imam Moussa Sadr* artery, nine buildings were built between the 70s and 80s. They are distinguishable from the commercial buildings in the area as they differ architecturally on the level of the style, building height, type of balconies, and the importance these buildings grant to landscaping. Through the residents' survey, I was able to track back the developers who

had built these buildings and interviewed two of them. Both had their father build a 3-storey building for housing the family (children and cousins). Although both had engaged in building development elsewhere in the city, neither had participated in any commercial projects in the area. Their professional development activities were conducted outside the neighborhood, mainly in municipal Beirut and rather on large-scale projects (e.g. towers) while they considered Bir Hassan at the time to be less commercial. Indeed, zoning regulations in Bir Hassan at the time had imposed clear guidelines for large setbacks, a limited number of floors and only residential building-uses, while elsewhere in Beirut these development permits were more intensive and consequently more prone to commercial development.

As a result, all buildings developed in the 70s and 80s period count a ground floor and 3-storey. They are characterized by stonewalls on the side and the ground floor is reserved for entrance. Single buildings do not incorporate shops or warehouses; they are pure residential buildings with no commercial occupancy. These buildings are usually reserved for the family exclusively. In general, there is one apartment per floor, sometimes two. The floors are divided among the family members, an apartment reserved for the parents, another one for the daughter; the other for the son and cousins. Partitions inside the house include wide entrances, a dining room, an office and a large balcony. The kitchen is quite large and bedrooms are located in the back providing privacy.

In general, most of the apartments in the 70s have wide and open balconies with balustrades where many of the inhabitants spend their time. One of the conducted interviews occurred on the respondent's balcony overlooking orange trees, which recalls a beautiful memory of the old Bir Hassan as described by one of the 80s residents.

Hence, these buildings are well maintained and gardened compared to the commercial ones. Greenery and vegetation, such as flowers, palm and orange trees are main characteristics of the building unit.

As of the 90s, commercial developments took over the area and many major Shiite real estate Development Companies opened their offices and branch offices in the neighborhood, delegating projects and working in partnerships together in the area. The designed questionnaire for developers aimed to unravel the scope of their building activity in the neighborhood, the processes of development (how they secure capital and land), relationships and partnerships with each other, with the municipality of Ghobeiry and the present political parties (Hezbollah and Amal) in the area. Reaching all of them was difficult at the time of the fieldwork due to security and political constraints.

The five developers I spoke to explain that they usually buy land, finance real estate deals and build or sub-contract a company to build projects. They typically coordinate the processes of development from the beginning till the end. The developers operating in the Bir Hassan neighborhood purchase unused land or undertake a building project with no formal commitment from any end users. In this sense, the end user of the development is unknown but the developer is confident that he will be able to find a buyer interested in this type of development. They purchased unused land from owners as of the 90s for potential development projects, hence, the amount of projects they executed in the area. Developers of this era build extra-floors reserved for duplex housing units (5th and 6th floor), for commercial purposes promoting an 'upscale lifestyle'. This was possible first with the establishment of Elyssar, which allowed the construction of 7 storey buildings in the area. Second, most of the Shiite developers hold a close relationship with the current municipality, to the extent that the architect of

the Ghobeiry municipality is one of the main developers operating in the neighborhood (conflict of interest?). However, during my conversation with the developers, they all claimed that the municipality's role is exclusively limited to 'policing', in other terms making sure that the project is being executed in respect of the building permit. Furthermore, it seems that the municipality has been intervening in facilitating the building activity on ground. One of the developers recently resorted to the municipal police to evict illegal squatters from the land where his project is to be implemented.

Developers in Bir Hassan started inaugurating projects in the neighborhood as of the 2000s. They hold big scale companies who gained a solid reputation in property development, construction, and real estate consulting in Lebanon and abroad especially in the Shiite community. Their offices include a pool of architects, engineers, and business associates. Furthermore, the developers I interviewed in majority have offices in the Bir Hassan neighborhood as well as in 'Dahieh' (main and branch offices). The typical residential building model in the neighborhood is made out of 4 to 6-storey building and 2 blocks (A and B), with the last two floors reserved for a duplex housing unit, the ground floor for commercial use (Building use map) and a relatively large parking space (2 to 3 parking spots per apartment). The implemented projects since the 90s differ only on the level of the design and the materials used (e.g. facades, partitions). Since 2004, the change in architecture occurred mainly on the level of the room sizes, which decreased. The new projects incorporate, other than the typical apartment model, a room for the house worker, a laundry room and enclosed balconies.

The notorious "mixed used Garden City development", which reminisces a beautiful memory of the Garden City project overseen under the French planners period, has been recently inaugurated in the area and forms one of the biggest scale projects in

the neighborhood. Areas are between 160 and 507 square meters with a view of Beirut. The project encompasses 13 blocks; each block has a private entrance, security and a private generator. Residents can also benefit from the shopping mall located below and other facilities (e.g. medical center, cinema, beauty parlor). The 'Garden City' company bought the land where it was built in 2007, and in 2010 one of the main developers was contracted to execute and implement the residential project, which is his company's first project in the Bir Hassan neighborhood (operates mostly in 'Dahieh'). The owner has, however, a vacant land in the area, left for the time being untouched. He furthermore operates closely with the other developers in the neighborhood. Developers in the area have at least worked on a minimum of eight projects. Yet, one of the developers has implemented forty-development projects in the area. He, furthermore, subcontracted the other active developers in the neighborhood for completing the construction activity, seeking design, infrastructure and advertisement services. Hence, the identified five main developers have worked on joint projects in the neighborhood. They either split the ownership by purchasing a parcel of land, or are subcontracted for the completion of the project. Most of them rely on private partnerships to secure capital (e.g. people from the same village as the owner, interested clients, friends, previous relationships or partnerships). They usually deposit a small amount to launch the building development project. They, then, sell apartments on maps and secure the capital for the construction. It they lack money; they opt for bank loans. In worst cases, the project would go bankrupt. One of the companies does not engage with banks, it only collaborates with individuals to secure capital and offers facilities for the buyers who do not have to provide a down payment. They only pay monthly amounts (e.g. 500$) distributed over several sub-payments for 4 to 8 years without interest. If someone fails to pay, by law it

is a 'felony'. However, most of the developers do not abide by this law acknowledging the fact that the buyer is already broke. Heading to court will not solve the issue; hence, they just pay him back so he moves out. Other developers in the neighborhood said that they collaborate with banks. Buyers pay a deposit if they do not have the full amount; they take loans from the bank to cover the rest of the amount.

Another one of the interviewed real estate development companies works exclusively on design and implementation projects and does not engage in the purchasing and marketing activity.

My interviews with developers and residents indicated that clients are identified, similarly to the developers' partners, through social ties, friendships, previous relationships, partnerships or simply advertisement. However, most of the developers run background checks on potential buyers profile them and study their financial capabilities. One of the developers further emphasized: "in general real estate agencies have to make small favors" justifying that "this is how it is in Lebanon". Usually, if the project is managed by a company people are most likely treated equally but when it comes to private development, developers might have to make concessions.

Developers recognize that they have a solid relationship with the political parties present in the area. They, furthermore, emphasize the fact that they do 'fit in this 'Shiite' framework that the parties have established in the Bir Hassan neighborhood; a safe environment and a 'Shiite' culture that both the developers themselves and the residents share. It is also widely repeated that one of the developers offered the parcel of land to the Amal movement to build its headquarters in the area in 2014. This same developer has recently opened a variety shop, which is attracting residents from the surrounding informal neighborhoods. However, all developers acknowledge that the

proliferation of security since 2013 affected the housing purchase activity in the neighborhood mainly on the level of buying (ownerships). Though prices dropped, the developers were not as affected because they mainly rely on partnerships, which decreases their risk of loss. Finally, all developers believe that the area still has a potential to further grow but decision-making is currently postponed due to the stagnation of the Lebanese real estate market.

E. Conclusion

Bir Hassan became part and parcels of Dahieh when its planning fell under a logic of sectarian order (Bou Akar, 2018). Political parties have been able through land (developers) and power (municipal councils) acquisition to appropriate the neighborhood and deploy security mechanisms transforming it into a securitized territory. They have been further able to do so by channeling the modes of production exclusively into the hands of "approved developers" that work closely to the movement and adhere to its ideology. Municipal authorities proved to be "good students of local governance and were able to strengthen their territorial hegemony and confirm the exclusion of local residents who do not belong in their world" (Harb, 2009). In the following chapter, I document living in the Shiite enclave based on the data collected from the current and previous residents of Bir Hassan.

CHAPTER

V. LIVING IN THE SHIITE ENCLAVE

In this chapter, I explore the lived space through the lenses of Bir Hassan's current and former residents and shop owners. I describe how they live within the Shiite enclave and adapt to the continuous transitioning neighborhood.

A. Residents' perceptions and practices of Bir Hassan

I identified twenty residents in the neighborhood through personal connections out of whom four moved out of the neighborhood. The latter confirm that the area's character changed. A new social class – middle income Shiite – moved in since 2006 attracted by the vibrant economic activity but also by the decrease of housing prices since 2013. This has been further possible with the shift in the neighborhood's political identity, after the terrorist attacks in 2013 and 2014, as an exclusive Shiite enclave. Six of the identified respondents live on the edges of the neighborhood while fourteen reside within the security parameter, as defined by the interviewees. Based on their perception of the boundaries of the area, fifteen perceived the 'square' as the boundaries of the neighborhood, which is the 'security parameter' (Refer to the map of Bir Hassan neighborhood in chapter IV). Only five considered the area to stretch from the Golf club to the BHV, located in Jnah. Most dwellers nonetheless acknowledge that the area's boundaries shrunk after the terrorist attacks in 2013 and 2014 to the 'securitized square'. One of the respondents even sighed saying that "the square area no longer feels like the 'original neighborhood' but it's more like Dahieh (Respondent #3)". The location of Bir Hassan amidst a large number of informal settlements means that residents of Bir

Hassan do not actually engage with the surrounding areas. Only one of the respondents mentioned that she occasionally goes to Sabra-Shatila to the vegetable market (Respondent #1). All others separated the neighborhood from its surrounding by referring to their residence area as an 'island' (Respondent #12), a transit area that is well connected to major transportation lines in the city while being at the same time well-disconnected from its surrounding. Furthermore, residents living south of the neighborhood, near the Ouzai road, expressed frustration and feelings of insecurity towards the visible presence of migrant workers and Syrians who gather during the day in search of construction site jobs (Respondents #3 and 8). The meeting point for those workers was originally the Rihab station (Airport road); however the Ghobeiry municipality transferred it towards the Sultan Ibrahim area (Figure 24).

Figure 24 Ghobeiry municipality
banner at Rihab station. Source:
Author, 2018.

Similarly, residents residing near the Kuwait Embassy also pointed out the fact that the roundabout has become in the past few years a bus stop for migrant workers and

the residents of the informal settlements, which led to high level of congestion on the streets and noise pollution (Respondent #20). More generally, residents on the edges of the neighborhood are the mostly affected by the surroundings both on the physical and social level (traffic, commercial activity, construction sites, safety). Conversely, out of the ten interviewed residents living inside the securitized square, eight reported feeling safe and securitized.

The sample of targeted residents encompasses families coming from different backgrounds ranging from middle to upper class, which confirms the hypothesis that the Bir Hassan neighborhood is home to diverse social classes, however they are mostly Shiite. Four of the interviewed residents, who came in before the 2000s to the area, currently moved out. They were in majority residing in Municipal Beirut (e.g. Hamra, Verdun, Karakol Druz, and Raouche) and mainly interested in the neighborhood residential, elegant character and its potential as a well-connected, planned area located near the famous beaches and the Golf club. Conversely, interviewed residents who moved in after the 2000s (12/20), were originally living in the Southern suburbs (e.g. Khaldeh, Bechamoun) (6/20), or emigrants from Africa (6/12), they therefore settled in the neighborhood since it embraces a similar culture to that of the southern suburbs, however, it is considered as safer, calmer and nicer. They furthermore had a connection with the developers (fourteen had family ties and six friendship ties). Twelve of the respondents had no previous relation with the developer, they happened to purchase this apartment randomly. On the other hand, eight of my sample knew the developer before purchasing the apartment, five through family ties whereby the developer is a relative of the family or the father himself and three whereby the developer happened to be a friend of the family. However, all of the respondents, in spite of their relation to the

developers, only purchased one single apartment in the area; four of which had relatives purchasing apartments in the neighborhood recently (e.g. daughter, brother).

All twenty interviewed residents stated that they initially moved to Bir Hassan because the area was considered calm, residential, but also since the rising new development projects delivered 'a promise' for the residents by providing bigger apartments, parking spaces, green spaces and security. The area is furthermore well connected and planned. It is considered 'chic and classy'. Most of those who moved in the 2000s do not report an actual change in the neighborhood as it still feels the same, just with the addition of security which made the area safer while those who were before the 2000s, report a massive, remarkable change in the area's character specially on the level of the social tissue, politics and sect.

On the level of social ties, only five of the interviewees reported that they did not build any connections in the area whereby fifteen made new friendships. However it is important to note that social ties in the neighborhood occurred only on the vertical level, between neighbors in the building, and on a street level. Rarely has anyone from the respondents made friends across the neighborhood. As a matter of fact, one of the respondents highlighted that she met a girl in college residing also in Bir Hassan however haven't she met her there she would've never knew that she lives in the same neighborhood. Hence, partitioning or segregation in the area occurred on a street level and further enhanced with the security incidences in 2013 and 2014.

However, one of the respondents argued that the limited accessibility in the area was not as negative since it provided a safe playground for kids in the neighborhood who were able to use and appropriate the streets, since the vehicular activity is limited. Moreover, since the kids 'playground' is limited to one street (no

access to adjacent streets), this fostered social networks and linkages among residents on the same street. This was not possible before the heavy security deployment in 2014. Yet, each street remains isolated or detached from the other adjacent ones, which renders the neighborhood highly fragmented. One of the interviewees in this scope argued that Bir Hassan was a neighborhood and became now multiple neighborhoods whereby each street represent a neighborhood by itself.

With the explosions of 2013 and 2014 that targeted the Iranian Embassy, the neighborhoods character shifted. Several residents described the area to become 'chaotic', 'overcrowded', 'Shiite', 'secluded', 'unsafe', 'highly securitized', 'inaccessible' but also 'gentrified'.

Most of those who moved in the 2000s do not report an actual change in the neighborhood as it still feels the same, just with the addition of security which made the area safer while those who were before the 2000s, report a massive, remarkable change in the area's character specially on the level of the social tissue, politics and sect.

Seven of the interviewees' no longer feel 'at home' in the neighborhood and four preferred to be silent about it. Hence, four of the 'original' residents who came in the 90s have relocated and others are considering relocating from the neighborhood. They are however stopped by the stagnated prices. It is hard to find buyers with the current housing market situation in Lebanon. Moreover, for the residents residing in the "square" and in proximity the Iranian embassy, it seems almost impossible to sell one's apartment, as highlighted by one of the respondents (#7) "Most likely the Amal movement will purchase our apartment at a cheap price to house the Iranians".

Residents considering relocation are mostly from the younger generation. The elderly, on the other hand, do acknowledge the change in the neighborhood character

however still consider the area as "home". Most of the residents' who moved to the area after the 2000s feel represented by the neighborhood's current characteristics and expressed a sense of belonging. They therefore approve the increase in security in the area, which reflects the political position of the latter who are in favor and in support of the ruling political movement. While those who moved before the 2000s do not feel safer nor more securitized or represented by the neighborhood's current characteristics and hence, lost from their sense of belonging to the neighborhood. If they still reside in the area, it is most likely that their children (second generation) relocated.

B. Conclusion

Bir Hassan neighborhood is an integral part of Dahieh. It got detached from Municipal Beirut and became an integral part of Dahieh Al-Janubiye. First of all, Bir Hassan is under the jurisdiction of the Ghobeiry municipality, which recently expanded its boundaries towards Ouzai. The municipality is a member of the Dahieh Al-Janubiye union of municipalities, which makes the Bir Hassan neighborhood a Dahieh neighborhood. Second, the building activity occurring in the area is detained by major Shiite developers since the 90s who have all offices in Dahieh and branch offices in the Bir Hassan neighborhood. They have also worked on development projects in the southern suburbs and are affiliated to the political parties operating in the area. Third, the terrorist attacks that shook Dahieh were replicated in the Bir Hassan neighborhood in 2013 and 2014. Bir Hassan was a target because of the presence of the Iranian Embassy, which is linked to Hezbollah. Bir Hassan is therefore a Shiite area and a Dahieh neighborhood. Many of the Amal movement representatives reside in the Bir Hassan neighborhood, which makes the area a highly securitized one alike Dahieh.

Residents who moved to the neighborhood as of the 2000s are all Shiite and were initially residents of Dahieh. Hence, Bir Hassan is an extension of Dahieh. The services in the area are all held by the Amal movement, and in 2014 after the political events the area's electricity disconnected from Beirut and was since linked to Dahieh's, a political decision to deprive the area from security since it became Shiite. Alike Dahieh, the trend of renaming streets after Martyrs has been replicated in Bir Hassan. This process of street renaming is embedded in the Shiite culture, more precisely in Hezbollah's ideology and history of reconstruction. Many shops in the neighborhood are branches of shops located in Dahieh or share a similar typology. Hence, it is safe to assume that Bir Hassan neighborhood is actually part of Dahieh and following a similar political and developmental agenda. Dahieh is therefore extending, building different types of enclaves ones created by the Hezbollah party and others by the Amal movement which highlights the division that occurred and conflict that rose between those parties as of 1978. The southern suburbs of Beirut are the product of the division between both parties Amal and Hezbollah, which are till nowadays contesting land and power through the indirect mobilization of citizens. A strong relation between the social, political, economic and urban fostering Shiite enclaves.

CHAPTER

VI. CONCLUSION

In my thesis, I provided a monograph on the Bir Hassan neighborhood and showed how it transitioned from a mixed residential area into a securitized territory under the gained influence and presence of the Amal movement. The neighborhood reveals to be a political center of Dahieh, held by the Amal movement and located at the gate of Municipal Beirut, which provides a bold political statement for other political parties in Lebanon. The enclaving that the area witnessed may have begun as a "political" territorialization, but it has precipitated social and economic transformations on the level of the neighborhood and its surroundings. It suggests the expansion of Beirut's southern suburbs, Dahieh, towards the capital city, reflecting the shifting territorial realities of Lebanon's geography and mirroring processes described by Bou Akar (2018) on the edges of Choueyfat and Aramoun.

What can we say about planning in this context? Most planning theorists concur that planning emerged to improve people's living conditions. They thus trace the emergence of planning to the early days of the Industrial revolution in Europe, describing planners as moved by the appeal of helping poor people confined in bad areas of the city (Friedman 1987; Cherry 1988; Carmon 1990; Burgess 1993). Within these traditions, planning has been theorized in multiple form, from comprehensive approaches that follow the rational scientific method (Brooks 2002) to advocacy approaches where planners deliberately stand by communities in need (Davidoff 1965) or, more recently, deliberative processes where planners mediate to define the common good (Forester 1999). The assumption that planning can however only *do* good has been

contested over the past three decades as a growing number of scholars have recognized that planning may be used for other ends. Harvey (1989) has for instance argued that planners have mostly supported capitalist interests. More recently, Yiftachel (1995), Bollens (1998), and Bou Akar (2018) have shown that planning can be used to serve ideological interests and organize political territories, or that it can even heighten conflict between communities. This is nicely echoed by Angotti (2013) who argued that: "it is not the absence of planning but the presence of a particular kind of planning" (p. 113) that produces enclaves. This "particular kind of planning" (Angotti 2013) suggests that elite groups and state authorities use planning tools as a mean of territorialization to control and oppress the weaker groups in the city (Yiftachel, 1998).

In Bir Hassan, I found planning to be an integral part of the enclaving process. This is channeled, I showed, through the work of the municipalities in relation to the political parties who operate within and outside them. In the thesis (Chapter V), I traced the transformation of the processes of planning from being held exclusively by state authorities to becoming a tool in the hand of the municipality, run by a Mayor openly associated with one of the powerful Shiite political parties, Hezbollah, yet coordinating with the Amal movement as well as the few "approved developers" in the area. Thus, the fact that people widely associate the neighborhood to the two Muslim Shiite political parties and widely assume that municipal authorities provide building permits exclusively to Shiite developers who sell Shiite residents reveals that the municipality's is part and parcel of the project of expanding the territorial boundaries of a "Shiite community".

Owing to a "decentralization" framework, the Ghobeiry municipality defines its own agenda of issues and portfolio of domains. In this context, its management of

the territories, be it in the provision of building permits (and hence allowing some developers to build and not others), in the naming of streets, in the "beautification" interventions, or any other form of "planning" becomes an opportunity to consolidate the making of the political territory that the Municipal authorities find desirable. This, in turn, further entrenches urban divisions and fosters the kind of splintered urbanism that planning is supposed to combat (Murray 2017). Could "decentralization", one of the most widely used planning recipes to enhance democracy, be fostering a form of planning in Bir Hassan that instead fosters sectarian territorialization. The thesis doesn't offer sufficiently exhaustive findings to conclude firmly on this note. Yet it provides sufficient signposts to indicate the importance of investigating further the limitations of this scale of governance in conflict cities.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 Historical Timeline and Building Activity in the Bir Hassan Neighborhood (Source: Author, 2018)
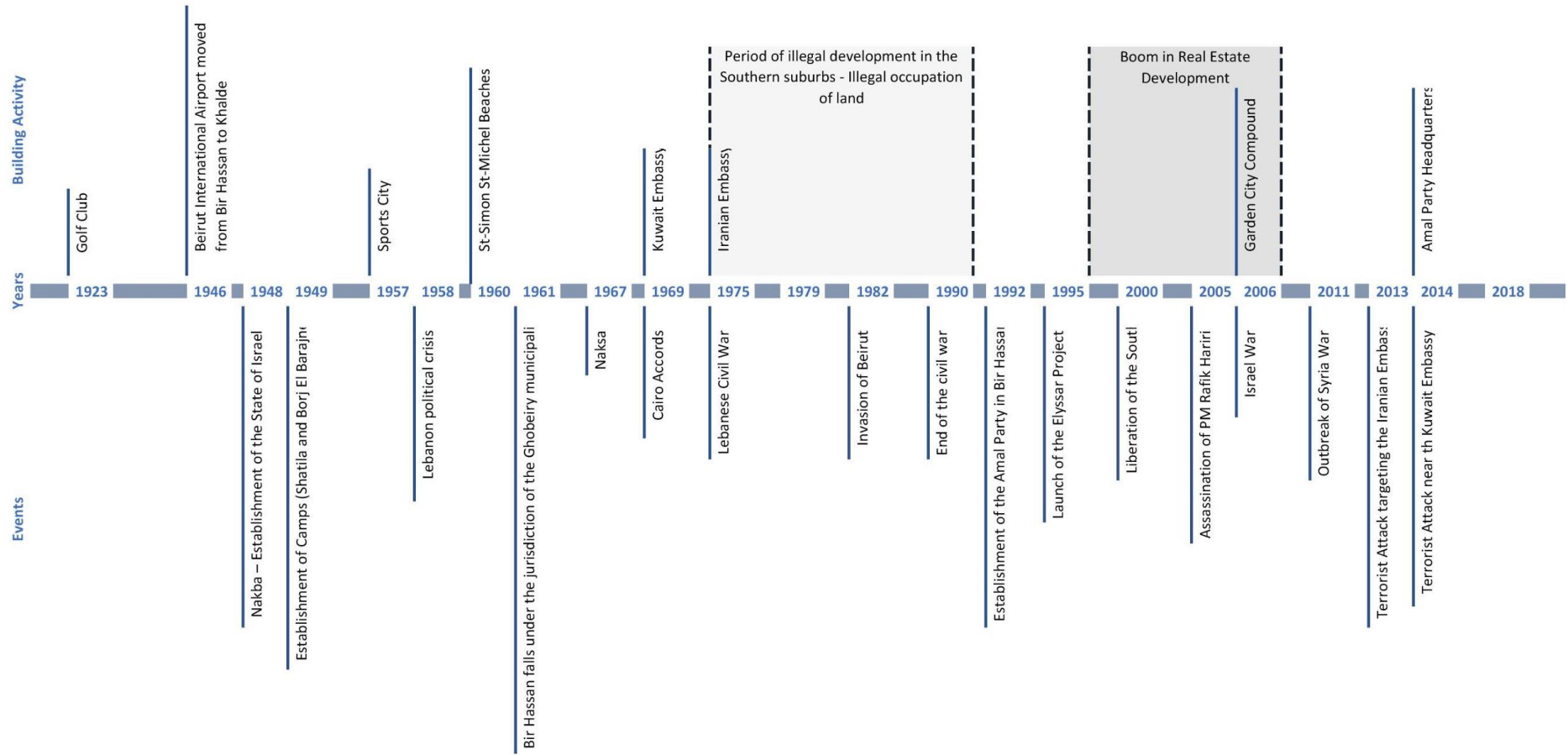
Appendix 2 Building permits data (Source: Municipality of Ghobeiry, 2018)

Permit Holder	Issue date	Building Permit Number	Lot Number	Specifications
1971				
Turkish Embassy	21/04/1971	000223	4487	
1975				
Ahmad Abed El Ghani El Anouti	21/02/1975	0524	4372	
Josiette Elias and partners	20/07/1975	0534	4332	
Nadim Assaad Fakhri and partners	6/8/1975	0531	4400	
1980				
Industries Association of Palestinian martyrs and sons	22/01/1980	0639	6896	
Hassan Mohamad Al Saboury Khayat	1/4/1980	0642	4466	
Samir Mansour and Partners	29/07/1980	0647	4478	
Akram Hakal and partners	29/10/1980	0658	4354	
Contracters and engineers company	13/11/1980	0660	4448	
1983				

Darar Ahmad Kenaan	18/05/1983	0776	4410	Building 1 underground floor and a 5th floor + modification in 4 floors
1985				
Ghassan Sekariyeh	16/08/1985	0833	4351	Additional 5th floor on the already existing structure
1986				
Mohamad Ali Mohamad and Haydar and partners	16/09/1986	0854	4702	Additional underground floors 3rd, 2nd warehouses and -1 showroom + GF and 3 floors
1989				
Hassan Ibrahim …	20/02/1989	0876	4385	3 underground floors + GF + 3 floors
1994				
Fatima Najib Attieh	22/01/1994	1080	4457	
1996				
Hikmat Chahrour	24/02/1996	1233	4419	Modification in building
1998				
Khalil Haidar	1/4/1998	1387	4361	2 underground floors with 1st underground for showroom + 4 floors
Sukaina Mohamad …	1/8/1998	1423	4423	Additional construction to the 5th floor
2003				

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Haidar Mohamad Haidar	11/3/2003	1615	4401	Modification of 4th floor that became one apartment instead of 2 + underground + ground floor + 4 floors
Ali and Abass and Zeinab and Mohamad Hassan Hammoud	18/03/2003	1616	4373	
Sally Hussein Nasser El Din	21/06/2003	1625	4434	
2004				
Ayman Hamid Ibadi and Ali Hassan Ibadi	8/6/2004	1678	4357	2 underground floors + GF + 4 residential floors + ventilation to be completed in 2 phases
Farid Mohamad and Dergham and Mohamad and Bilal Ahmad Shmaysani	23/03/2004	1666	4377	2 underground parking + modification of parking spaces on GF + modification of floor for shops + 4th floor roof
2005				
Ali and Taan Fayad Hamadeh	26/09/2005	1754	4411	Modification for additional construction on underground 1 and 2 and GF + office + 4 floors residential
2006				
Rim Real Estate Company	24/02/2006	1776	4475	
Ali Moussa Nenshar and Ali Hussein Darwish	24/02/2007	1777	4356	
Kamal Ali Shaer and partners	27/02/2006	1778	4483	
2007				

Said Hassan Fouaani	2/1/2007	1854	4451	Underground with ground floor offices and 3 floors offices and residential and the 4th floor duplex
Khalil Haidar and partners	27/01/2007	1861	4382	
Ghassan Khalil Jeshi and partners	3/2/2007	1862	4380	
Fouad and Mohamad Chaalan and Khodor Mohamad Kamal	15/09/2007	1898	4417	Inside modification of GF
Farah and Hadi and Samer Hassan Al Sabouri Al Khayat	31/12/2007	1921	4387	Modification
Rawan Hassan Saleh	20/11/2007	1909	4331	Modification of partitions in buildings
Mohamad Mohamad Nassib and Partners	31/12/2007	1936	4412	Paying fines for not respecting the permit conditions
Tarek … and partners	21/11/2007	1911	4333	Underground 2 floors and GF and floors + ventilation
Shawki and Adnan Kharab	26/02/2007	1863	4712	
2009				
Mourtada Mahmoud Kabalan	30/03/2009	1980	4496	
The Amal Movement	23/04/2009	1992	4440	4 underground floors + GF + 3 repeated floors and one fourth + 5th roof + ventilation
Architect Ahmad Lamaa (delegation)	9/4/2009	1987	4480	2 underground floors + GF + 3 floors + 4th duplex
Youssef Mohsen El Hajj Souleiman	2/4/2009	1983	4378 2 sections: 2 and 4	
2010				

Moustafa Faysal Ahmad	10/2/2010	2032	4435	2 undergrounds + ground floor + 3 floors and 4th duplex
Ali Hussein Tabaja	16/09/2010	2069	4481	3 underground floors + GF + 3 floors + 4th duplex and 2 blocs A and B
Salah el Din Ayoub and partners	13/08/2010	2062	4329	2 underground floors + GF + 3 floors + 4th duplex + ventilation
Ali and Abass Fouani and Samer Cherri	11/1/2010	2029	4319	2 underground floors + GF + 6 floors and 7th floor duplex + ventilation
Hassan Abdallah Isameil	22/04/2010	2044	4335	
Hassan Abdallah Isameil	22/04/2011	2035	4334	
Mourtada Mahmoud Kabalan	22/04/2010	2046	4495	
2011				
Joumana Majed	13/01/2011	2093	4381	Modification and additional construction for 2 sections 4 and 6
2013				
Samia Mohamad Younis El Fakhani	12/8/2013	2186	6783	
Talaab Diab Hadi	20/08/2013	2187	8/ 4447	
2014				
Youssef Hussein Darwish	28/02/2014	2202	4397	
Diala Said Al Assaad (delegation)	3/1/2014	2197	4400	Modification and additional construction in the 5th floor
Ali Arabi and Ihsan Al Amin	18/03/2014	2205	4374	
Hassan Ali Hrajli	7/6/2014	2209	5/4500	

		2015		
Residence	13/07/2015	2245	4482	2 underground floors + GF + 4 floors + 5th duplex
		2016		
Ibrahim Saleh	11/2/2016	2256	4499	Modification without increasing space by adding brick barracks
Atef and Maher Salim	5/12/2016	2271	6780	
Ali and Hassan Ribah	27/04/2016	2264	4362	
		2017		
Zayd Bassam (delegation)	24/06/2017	2278	4473	Modification + additional space
Mortada Kabalan	6/12/2017	2287	4494	
		2018		
Hussein Ali Al Moussawi	17/01/2018	2290	4514	
Ali Msheik	25/01/2018	2294	189/5/A	Partition of section A5 to become a photography center
Ali Msheik	25/01/2019	2293	189/8/B	Partition of lounge B8 to become a lab